# INTERPRETERS OF GOD

BY

FRANK THEODORE WOODS, D.D.

3/6n21

250.3 S
Class

W863
Book

General Theological Seminary Library
Chelsea Square, New York

PRESENTED BY
Soc'y for Promoting Religion and Learning

# INTERPRETERS OF GOD

"So the other told him, that by that he was gone some distance from the gate, he would come at the house of the Interpreter, at whose door he should knock, and he would shew him excellent things."—*Pilgrim's Progress.*

# INTERPRETERS OF GOD

BY

FRANK THEODORE WOODS, D.D.

BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH

GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY NEW YORK

LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NEW YORK AND TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN CO.
1922

250.3 S
W863

71610

TO

MY FELLOW-WORKERS

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

# PREFACE

THE contents of the chapters which follow formed the main part of my first Charge to the Diocese of Peterborough. Such utterances have to be published, and are proverbially dull. But the times are stirring, and there is no excuse for dullness on the part of any man to whom some responsibility of leadership has been given in speaking to those comrades with whom he faces the task which has been committed to the Society of Christ. The book claims to be neither original nor comprehensive, but I have tried to speak simply and plainly on a few of the living issues before the Church; and I send it forth shorn of what is more immediately local and diocesan, in case any other fellow-workers for the Kingdom of God may care to read what I said, and in the hope that, if so, their hands may be strengthened for our common work.

THEODORE PETRIBURG:

*Christmas*, 1921.

## CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| I. THE SUPREME INTERPRETATION | 9 |
| II. WORSHIP | 19 |
| III. SACRAMENTS | 31 |
| IV. REUNION | 44 |
| V. THE VILLAGE | 60 |
| VI. POLITICS | 73 |

# INTERPRETERS OF GOD

## I

### THE SUPREME INTERPRETATION

In making any estimate of the Church's influence upon society, whether in a diocese or in a nation, there is a fundamental question which must always be asked at the outset, What does the Church exist for? Church-people as a rule are not accustomed to set themselves to the serious and careful consideration of such an enquiry. The average Englishman takes the Church as he finds it, and is more than satisfied if he can help in some humble way to "get on with the war" in which the Church is engaged. To the clergyman this means mainly the routine of parish work, with which we of the clergy are familiar. To the churchwarden it means such general assistance, particularly on the financial side, as he can give, leading up to the high satisfaction of showing no deficit on the balance sheet presented at the Easter Vestry. To the other officials and workers it means, in the common phrase, doing their job to the best of their ability, and contributing in a general way to the prosperity and efficiency of the Church of England. But behind all this, and below all this, there is the question which I have mentioned, What does the Church exist for? On the answer to this depends the estimate which we may form from the figures and statistics which the Visitation has produced. To this test we must submit all the phases of the work—parochial, ruridecanal, diocesan—with which we are concerned.

And I answer the question at once. The Church exists to unveil to the world the character of God. This was the purpose of the Incarnation. It is also the purpose of that extension of the Incarnation—to use an ancient phrase—which is involved in the creation of the Body of Christ. It will be found that this answer involves all the others which may rightly be suggested. The Church exists to glorify God, but it is by the revelation of His character that God is glorified. The Church exists to bring men to God, but it is by the unveiling of His character that they are irresistibly attracted. The Church exists to set up God's kingdom, but it is only when men understand the character and purpose of the King that they will recognise His sovereignty and

give their homage to His cause. The Church, it has been finely said, is a "transparent veil through which we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

In Christ, then, and for all time, God was completely unveiled. In the Church, which is Christ's Body, God is interpreted to each generation as it comes, and the interpretation is adequate just so far as the Church is in touch with her Lord, and in her life and behaviour reflects His beauty.

At any given moment, therefore, the Church can and must correct the impression she gives of God by the impression which Christ gave of Him, which impression is recorded for us in the Gospels. For the root fact of our faith is that for us Jesus has the value of God: "Deum ex Deo, lumen ex lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero." Apart from Jesus and His life, God would have very little meaning for us. Therefore, to understand the character of God we must study the character of Jesus. And that is a test to which every generation of churchmen must address itself anew if it is to make to the world that fresh presentation of God which each successive generation of the human family is entitled to have. Believe me, there is no task more urgent for us, the members of the Church to-day, than to rethink God. It is not less theology that we need, but more. We so easily lose sight of His real character unless we are continually correcting it by Christ. What is the average churchman's idea of God? A Being all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful? But these adjectives convey very little to an ordinary mind. A "Providence that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will"? But "Providence" covers a whole desert of vagueness in men's thoughts of God. So many of us "believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," but, to judge by our acting belief—as apart from quotation and convention—we do not get much farther. St. Augustine has to remind us that God did not make the world and then go away, and some of us need the reminder. We do not think out the character of God as unveiled in Jesus Christ. Yet this is the way to know God, and the only way. Let Luther emphasise the point:

"Whensoever thou art occupied in the matter of thy salvation, setting aside all curious speculations of God's unsearchable majesty, all cogitations of works, of traditions, of philosophy—yea, and of God's law too—run straight to the manger and embrace this Infant and the Virgin's little Babe in thine arms, and behold Him as He was, born, growing up, conversant among men, teaching, dying, rising again, ascending up above all the heavens, and having power above all things. This sight and contemplation will keep thee in the right way, that thou mayest follow whither Christ is gone."[1]

[1] Quoted by Glover, *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, p. 113.

Listen to a greater than Luther: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." We have all heard of Him, but to see Him, to study Him, to investigate the vast tracts of God unveiled in Him, to know Him as a man knows his friend—this is only given to those who at cost of pains and trouble are prepared to learn the truth as it is in Jesus. And that we must do if we are to unveil Him in this modern world; otherwise our representation of Him will be distorted and misleading.

To study Christ is to understand God. This is at once the Church's test and the Church's hope. To this study for a few minutes I invite you. I make no apology for doing so. Here is the very fountain-head of Church life—that is, of diocesan life. For we dare not represent our task in terms less lofty than this—to do our part in unveiling the character of God to the men and women of this Midland diocese in which we live. To some of us that description may sound startling. If so, it only shows how far we have drifted from the original purpose of all Church life. To all of us it must bring a vivid sense of our shortcomings as we measure our achievement by such an ideal. But it will be none the less surely exhilarating and inspiring as we reflect that the purpose of God for the Church cannot finally fail of fulfilment.

To ask, What think ye of Christ? then, is to ask, What think ye of God? To think rightly of Christ is to think rightly of God. What do we notice as His distinguishing marks as we study Christ? How did Christ portray God *then*, and how must we portray Him now? I want to direct your attention to three hall-marks in that character, and I will call them Truth, Faith, and Love.

First, then, Truth. His personal sincerity was unclouded. "He possessed," says Liddon, "that one indispensable qualification for any teacher, especially for a teacher of religion. He believed in what He said without reserve, and He said what He believed without regard to consequences." He proclaimed Himself to be the very embodiment of Truth, and history has attested the claim. No more steadfast critic of mere conventionality ever lived, whether conventionality in religion or in social life. Truth at any price, rather than peace at any price, was His motto. His impeachment of the religious humbug of His day[1] still leaves the reader gasping. The man who sought to evade his duty to his parents on the plea of his Church obligations received short shrift at His hands.[2] His attitude to mere pomposity and professionalism in religion has been enshrined for all time in the story of the Pharisee and the Publican. His charge against the Church of His day was that it misrepresented

[1] See St. Matt. xxiii. [2] St. Matt. xv. 3-9.

the character of God. It proclaimed a God whose main interests were in finicky matters of ritual and the nice calculations of legalistic piety.[1] He proclaimed a God, natural—if I may reverently say so—human, penetrating through all the crust of life to the essentials of mercy, justice, kindness; terrible against sin in all its forms, but infinite in love for the sinner. The externals of religion—as apart from the worship of God and the service of man—He brushed away as irrelevant. While the clergy of His day were poring over their books of rules in deep agitation as to whether it was correct or not to give a man his health on the Sabbath day, He was looking on in white anger and telling the poor invalid to stretch forth his hand.[2] It is evident that if anything can be said to have roused Him to fury—and He, remember, was the character of God in action—it was the prostitution of religion in its depth and height to the petty shallows of a false religiousness. And for this reason: that it was, and is, a gross misreading and misrepresentation of the character of God. To be misrepresented is a form of suffering which for most men is peculiarly hard to bear, but for God to be misrepresented by those to whom His cause has been entrusted, by the very society to which He has given the task of representing Him among men, this is intolerable indeed. And Christ's quarrel with the Church of His day, or of any day in which it is guilty of the same failure, is the measurement of the danger to which His society is always exposed if it forgets to correct its idea of God by His.

Nor was He any more conventional in His social ways. His summoning to His service of a publican, and attending afterwards a feast in his house, brought upon Him the remonstrances of the respectable. To the anxious concern of the good church-people of His day, He consorts with the lower classes as readily as He accepts invitations from the rich. He is written down in bitter contempt as the friend of publicans and sinners. Yet every occasion is turned to account for real religion. Little by little, over-riding prejudices, slighting traditions, yet using and endorsing all that was sound in the teaching of the Church, and with that true courtesy and tact which comes from utter straightness of soul and speech, He sketches afresh the character of God. Gradually men—simple men and women for the most part—are attracted, whereas the authorities, the men officially responsible to represent God, are first surprised,[3] then exasperated,[4] then agog for His destruction.[5] He spoke truth without fear or favour, and He was Truth.

[1] St. Matt. xv. 10-20 ; St. Mark ii. 23-28. [2] St. Mark iii. 1-6.
[3] St. Mark i. 27. [4] St. Mark iii. 6. [5] St. John xi. 53.

I turn to the next great feature in this amazing picture, His Faith. "Jesus," says a modern writer,[1] "said that no one trusted God enough, and that was the source of all the sin and tragedy." He came to redress this lack and to teach men faith. Nothing is more solemnising and inspiring, as we watch that life, than His complete confidence in the character of God. In the little matters of personal life,[2] food, clothing, domestic crises,[3] as well as in the larger issues of character and service, God knows, God cares. God—so Christ proved by demonstration—rejoices with them that do rejoice, and weeps with them that weep. The character of God, so Jesus incessantly taught, guarantees to those who count upon it and act upon it safety for time[4] and eternity.[5] Nothing surprised Him and grieved Him so much as men's failure to count upon God even in the common dangers of physical life.[6] But when a man was forthcoming who, catching a glimpse of God's character in Christ, adventured Himself upon it, His satisfaction was unbounded and His commendation unstinted.[7] His whole attitude in this regard is well summed up by an unconventional writer:[8] "First, that a man's business is to do the will of God; second, that God takes upon Himself the care of the man; and third, therefore, that a man must never be afraid of anything."

Counting on the character of God, He believed in the always available power of God. He made no distinction between God's intervention in the physical and the spiritual sphere, except to make it clear that the spiritual was the greater.[9] If the need was there, if men "had faith as a grain of mustard seed," the power would flow. It may be said that He trained His disciples to believe in this power of God. With Him they saw it work in the natural world,[10] in every kind of physical ailment,[11] in the mysterious sphere of personality,[12] even in face of death itself.[13] They discovered in literal and repeated experience that all things are possible to him that believeth. With this unfaltering confidence in the character of God and the power of God Jesus moved among men as a Sovereign. He was never taken aback, never taken off His guard, never found unequal to the occasion, always the master of every situation. And this with no apparent effort or straining after effect. With a life lived in God, His

[1] Dr. Cairns.
[2] St. Matt. vi. 25-34.
[3] St. John ii. 1-11; St. Luke vii. 11-17.
[4] St. Luke xii. 7.
[5] St. Mark xii. 26, 27.
[6] St. Mark iv. 40.
[7] St. Matt. viii. 10, 13; St. Mark v. 34; St. Luke xxiii. 42, 43.
[8] George Macdonald.
[9] St. Mark ii. 9-11.
[10] St. Mark iv. 39; St. Mark v. 30, R.V.
[11] St. Matt. iv. 23, 24.
[12] St. Luke viii. 35, 39.
[13] St. John xi. 43.

resources are illimitable and always at hand. Day by day He comes forth from His place of prayer conquering and to conquer. And this, on its human side, was the secret of it all. Nor must we for a moment allow ourselves to suppose that what was possible for Him is impossible for us. He taught His disciples to pray, and, learning this, they learned to use "the ability which God giveth." Like Him, they counted on God and the power flowed.[1] That power has never been withdrawn. It was made available for the Church; its coming was sacramentally signalled on the day of Pentecost. Our lack of faith, our relegating God from the category of realities to the category of conventions, has in large measure let it go. We can describe it better than we can use it. In the words of an article in the press not long ago:

"It is more than likely that a host of preachers understand far better than the Apostles what happened on the day of Pentecost. But they do not find for that reason that their hearers are pricked to the heart, or that changes are wrought in the scene where they declare the same message. The men of Pentecost did not leave things as they found them, but with the new power committed to them they turned the world upside down. They may not have known how they did this; but they did it, and the doing is the great matter."[2]

But this is not all. As wonderful, as unusual in these days as Christ's faith in God, was His faith in men. He had an unbounded respect for men as such. He never rushed people into decisions. On the contrary, He sometimes put obstacles in their way to make them think.[3] He would accept no ill-considered homage.[4] Yet He abhors indecision.[5] In parable after parable He commends the man who thinks energetically and acts decisively. Even the unjust steward is commended, not for his virtue, but for the way in which he sized up the situation, thought out his line of action, and promptly took it. Man is so essentially great, so capable of making a worthy plan of life and carrying it out, that failure to do so is unforgivable. It is the unprofitable servant, the man who hides his talent, Mr. Facing-both-ways and Mr. Ready-to-halt, who find themselves in the outer darkness. It is not so much the men who do wrong things who fall under His lash; it is the men who fail to do right ones. And this because He has so high an ideal of the capacity of man and his destiny. More than any other teachers before or since, He believes in man. In this matter His actions speak louder than His words. He calls men to be His helpers who look anything but promising to begin with. With one, indeed, His confidence is misplaced. But with the others His generous belief in them

[1] Acts v. 16. [2] *The Times*, May 14, 1921.
[3] St. Luke xiv. 25-33. [4] St. Luke ix. 57-62. [5] St. Matt. viii. 21, 22.

is more than justified. In the shifting Simon He sees the future Rock.[1] In the revolutionary extremist[2] He sees the steadfast worker. In the melancholy pessimist[3] He unearths the budding missionary.[4] No trouble is too great if only He may deal with the bits of priceless human material which we call men, discover them to themselves, and unveil God before their eyes. The miserly tax-farmer, the more than unorthodox woman by the well, the starchy Pharisee who invited Him to dinner, the sisters in the Bethany cottage, the woman whose past would not bear investigation, the distinguished churchman who would only come to Him at night—to these and a thousand others He gave Himself. He believed in them. He saw possibilities in them which only God could see. And they responded to His faith.

He believed in men. But He was independent of them. No leader ever cared less for mere numbers, or took less pains to cultivate influential support. At the one time in His life when He was well on the way to a large and organised popularity He turned on the crowds, rebuked their materialism, and proceeded to deliver an address which created widespread dissatisfaction. When His disciples suggested that He was going too far, He spoke further startling and searching words which caused all but a handful to desert His company and withdraw from His cause.[5] The final demonstration of His faith in man was the scene at Calvary. There He fixed man's value for ever. He proclaimed that the renovation of man was worth all that even God could do. And what God could do, He did.

That brings me to the last main note of that immeasurable character—Love. It is here, perhaps, that our conventional ideas are most inadequate. God is love, we say. And the phrase is so familiar that only by a deliberate mental effort can we fill it with any serious import. In fact, the only way to fill out its infinite meaning is to watch it in action—that is, to study Christ. Remind yourself that Christ's behaviour in contact with human need is God's, and you will begin to rethink God to some purpose. Churchmen by the score are content with the idea of a remote God—just, indeed, and generous, taking official measures to counteract human sin, making certain demands on human services, but more a God with whom some day we must settle our account in another world than a God who comes to our side in this one. It is curious how many people go through life with these vague ideas of God, when open before them, if they would but study it, is the portrait of God as drawn by Christ and

[1] St. John i. 42. [2] Simon the Zealot. [3] St. John xi. 16.
[4] According to an ancient tradition, St. Thomas was the first missionary to India. [5] St. John vi.

recorded in the New Testament. Thousands lose the glory of religion, its peace and power, simply through intellectual indolence. If, as has been asserted, one of the besetting sins of the Englishman is mental inertia, the loss to him in his religion is colossal. And what is the meaning of the love of God when we look at Christ? We see a God—I must use human language with all reverence—planning, coming, teaching, healing, involving Himself in all the interests, the joys, the woes of humankind, talking to men in their houses, walking with them in their fields, standing in their streets, blessing their children, touching their weddings into new joy, turning their funerals into festivities,

"everywhere breaking to men the bread of life. And when at last the forces of evil gathered thick around Him, walking alike without display or dismay the path of suffering appointed for Him, and giving His life at Calvary, that through His death the world might live."[1]

In other words, when the need is for man to take the initiative in obedience and sacrifice, God takes it. The scenes of common life are ransacked—the shepherd seeking his sheep, the woman searching for her coin, the King compelling the villagers to come in to his feast, the father running down the road to meet his long-lost son—in order that there may be no misunderstanding about this God who will encompass every soul with the unfaltering pressure of His love until the citadel falls and the soul is won.

It was by a Divine instinct that the men who painted the picture of Christ gave more time and space to the record of His passion. For to grasp the final meaning of God one must survey the wondrous cross. His love was tender and human. Watch Him with the children; watch Him with His men. Mark the beauty of His friendship; His infinite courtesy, tact, and sympathy. All this is wonderful, but in the Passion we touch a love that is literally indescribable. It is so awe-fully deliberate. As the Sovereign-commander of circumstances, not their victim, He gives His life for the world. And this love that gives so much is the love that asks so much. His tests of discipleship are tremendous. He does not shrink from demanding the last test of loyalty. The disciple is to do what He literally did in that last dreadful procession to Golgotha. "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."

But if Christ was God in action, how could any human being offer Him less? For in the Passion He presented the world with a certificate bearing the sign manual of the eternal that no force in the world is to be compared to love. Love, and love only, is omnipotent, for God is Love.

[1] Speer, *The Man Christ Jesus*, p. 86.

You may think it strange that I should speak like this in a Visitation Charge. But, as I said at the beginning, it is futile to discuss the Church's impact on the diocese unless we are first clear as to its purpose, and have some standard whereby to measure its aims and activities. That standard is clear. The object of the Church, and therefore of our diocesan fellowship, is to unveil the character of God to men. But if so, the Church must itself understand that character. In a new grasp of the content of God—I am sorry to use such a technical phrase—lies at once the Church's need and the Church's hope. The misunderstanding of God is at the root of most of the indifference and the apathy of which complaints are constantly made within and without the great fellowship. If God—may I speak quite plainly?—is as dull as one might suppose, to judge by some parishes and some services—and shall I add some parsons?—it is little wonder that people sheer off from organised religion. The very fact of this indifference to the Church is in some cases an evidence of the fact that men know instinctively that God is so much bigger than any impression of Him which the Church is able to give, is concerned with issues so much larger than those in which the average parish appears to be interested.

It comes to this, that the rethinking of the character of God must begin at home. Bishops, priests, and laity alike are in need of this conversion. "The object of Jesus," as has been well said, "was to induce men to base all life on God. He lays all the emphasis on the thought-out life."[1] And that must mean, in the first instance, that revaluation of life which follows immediately on a revaluation of God. Let the Church grasp afresh Christ's idea of God, and we shall begin to move. All our parish life depends ultimately upon this. Where God is not understood, or misunderstood, the parish life is thin and meagre. Religion is identified with routine, or at best looked on as a method of insurance against the other world. How are you to rouse people who won't come to church? What is to be done with the man who doesn't believe in foreign missions, or the warden who hates to see money going out of the parish? What can you suggest for the men or the women who look upon their attendance in church on Sundays as a kind of weekly whitewash, so that on Monday they can go back to the same old life of sin and slackness?

You may talk till you are tired. Many of us no doubt have done so. There is one unfailing remedy. Show these people what kind of God they are up against. Interpret to them His character. Make them understand how He feels towards them

[1] Glover, *The Jesus of History*, p. 118.

and what He really wants of them. Explain Christ to them, and teach them how to correct their idea of God by Him. For if we really believe that God is like Christ, that the character which poorly and faintly I have tried to recall to your minds is not merely the Christ of the first century but the God of the present day; the God who makes Himself known to us in the breaking of bread; the God whom we meet in our churches when two or three are gathered together in His Name, the God to whom our ancient prayers are addressed; the God who in a thousand providences, blessings, guidances, has been pressing His love upon us; if God is like that, then everything else follows—everything, both in our Church life and in our parochial life. If God is like that—and He is.

## II

## WORSHIP

The character of God as unveiled in Christ and interpreted by the Church—this is the background of all I desire to say, and not least of the subject which concerns me in this chapter: the worship of the Church. The character of our worship, its depth, its intensity, the intelligence and reverence with which it is offered, all depend on what we know of the character of God. Knowing God in Christ, worship must of necessity mean the orientation of all life to Him, whether formally and deliberately expressed in the worship of the sanctuary, or in what we call the common things of daily life. Worthy worship, therefore, must express the devotion of the whole being and of all life. Conversely, it must express the character of God. This is the test to which we must bring every religious activity, every method of devotion, whether inside the church or outside. This is not so easy as we may imagine. We are not accustomed to judge our ways of worship on their merits, but in accordance with our own prepossessions. A large number of church-people, perhaps most of those who are really interested in the services, think in terms of party. I am not speaking now merely or mainly of the militant extremists on either side: the men on the one hand who hate the Pope as they hate the devil, or the men on the other hand who regard the Reformation as the supreme calamity in the history of the English Church. Unfortunately, there is no subject in regard to which we are more tied and bound by the chains of past controversy than the subject of the worship and services of the Church. We seem unable to get free either from the controversy with Rome in the sixteenth century or with Puritanism in the seventeenth. Both these epochs made such deep ruts in the mind of the Church that it is difficult for any vehicle of thought to get out of them. Yet the time has come when the effort must be made. Old Mr. Prejudice and his sixty deaf men must be ordered off the premises before we can profitably discuss the worship of the Church in the twentieth century. In other words, the question to be asked about any method which is used or proposed is not, Am I used to it ? still less, Is

it consonant with my school of thought? but only, Does it help to unveil the character of God, and can it help men to approach Him in reverence and sincerity? The time has come, in fact, for the Church of England to get out of the valleys on to the heights, to survey the whole great landscape of devotion, and to make her choice from the treasures of devotional life in all the centuries, always applying the unfailing touchstone which will show which is the true gold—namely, the spirit of the New Testament and the standard of the undivided Church. Any worship or method of worship which fails to pass this test is unlikely either to unveil the character of God or to help men in their approach to Him.

True worship is so natural, so human, so uplifting, so exhilarating, that its neglect is a national calamity. Yet with that calamity we are faced at the present time. It is true that only a small proportion of our people ever enter a place of worship. Again and again I have been reminded, in reading the returns which have been sent in, of the terrible disproportion in many parishes between the seating capacity of the church and the number of people who attend it. This is due to many causes. In the first place, the convention of church attendance is gone. Practically no one goes to church because it is respectable to do so. Therefore, it is to be assumed that those who do go really wish to. In so far as this makes for more reality in our Church life we may view it without regret. But poor attendance at church is far from being a modern phenomenon. In this respect things were probably much worse 100 years ago. The industrial revolution, as the movement is commonly called, passed over the land like a storm in its suddenness, sweeping away many national conventions, and among them the place of the Church in the life of the people. A dislocation of national life took place on a tremendous scale through the artificial conglomerations of population in mushroom towns.[1] Owing to the extraordinary progress of mechanical invention this was probably unavoidable, but care and thought and a deeper interest in the human side of life would have obviated many of the evils which followed. The fellowship of industry was broken up into groups, which afterwards came to be labelled Capital and Labour, and

[1] At the beginning of the nineteenth century the majority of mills in Lancashire and Yorkshire worked fifteen hours. The regular working hours, even for children, Saturdays included, were from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. On Sundays always some, and sometimes all, were employed from 6 a.m. till noon cleaning the machinery. This was not conducive to church-going. The same was true of the coal-mines, where fourteen hours a day was the usual average working time. See Hammond, *The Town Labourer*, pp. 146, 174.

a fierce spirit of competition set in which played havoc with ideals of worship. For thousands conditions of work were such as to make it impossible for them to keep Sunday in the old way.

In large measure, of course, this state of affairs was not found in the villages, where life was not so dislocated and habits not so disturbed, with the result that then, as now, the percentage of churchgoers to the population was incomparably larger. A deeper cause than this, of which, indeed, the state of affairs just mentioned was only a symptom, was the materialism of the nineteenth century. The old human valuations of life began to disappear; the worth of a man was the price of his labour, and competition for wealth began on an unprecedented scale. Men believed that the philosophy of life according to which the strongest in terms of economic capacity survived, and the weakest went to the wall, was entirely in accord with the teachings of nature and science. Through all the many phases of the movement, says a skilled writer,[1] this philosophy of success, there ran the same dominant note of self-assertion, the fundamental conception of the supremacy of force. "Life exists for me; all the dim æons behind have toiled to produce me. I am the fittest; give me my rights, stand clear of my way; I want, and I will have."

That philosophy translated into international politics produced the war. That philosophy translated into industrial organisation produces the troubles in which we now find ourselves. It is the very negation of the ideals of Christ, and it is hardly surprising that a century dominated by such teaching and practice is not one in which the spirit of worship was strong. This fact, however, does not excuse the Church from examining herself, and from the necessity of confessing that if the people have lost the habit of worship she is not by any means free from blame. If worship is the most exhilarating occupation for the human mind, we have to account for the fact that to large numbers of people it means a weekly boredom which some of them, notably the younger ones, are glad when possible to escape. "There is something to be said for the view that it is good for young people occasionally to submit to being bored; there is nothing to be said for the widespread practice of using Church services for this purpose." So says a witty observer. In attempting an estimate of what is wrong in our services I am not endorsing the view that the supreme test of them is popularity, or forgetting that no man can properly worship or appreciate worship without self-discipline and pains. None the less, we have suffered, and still suffer, from a certain formality in our services,

[1] Benjamin Kidd.

which is peculiarly repugnant to, and which ill consorts with, that craving for reality which is itself a welcome symptom of the present time. It is true that we have a priceless Prayer-Book, but even virtues have their defects, and we often lose that spontaneity which is one of the secrets of corporate worship, and the very familiarity of the words begets inattention, which is equally fatal to devotion. I am reminded by many of my clergy that our services are not elastic enough, that they do not easily cover the special circumstances or needs of the moment. I was myself present on more than one occasion at services during the war, at moments of grave crisis in the life of our nation, at which there was but little trace of the actual state of affairs either in the prayers or the sermon. I find even now that there are clergy who depreciate any departure from or addition to the prescribed routine of Matins and Evensong.

Looking a little deeper, there is a lack of fellowship in our worship which very closely touches the spot in regard to our failure. The congregation is often a collection of disjointed units, assembled in a building in which they have no particular interest, rather than God's family circle assembled in their spiritual home. Many of them, in towns at least, are unknown to each other, and the behaviour of some of them at the prospect of strangers entering their pew is sometimes the very negation of all that worship ought to stand for.

To look deeper still, I believe that the root cause of the Englishman's neglect of worship in the last hundred years has been that he has not really related worship to life. A wise critic has laid his finger upon this as the spiritual failure of the nineteenth century:

> "The last century, with all its brilliant achievement in scientific discovery and increase of production, was spiritually a failure. The sadness of that spiritual failure crushed the heart of Clough, turned Carlyle from a thinker into a scold, and Matthew Arnold from a poet into a writer of prose. The secret of the failure was that the great forces which move mankind were out of touch with each other, and furnished no mutual support. Art had no vital relation with industry; work was dissociated from joy; political economy was at issue with humanity; science was at daggers drawn with religion; action did not correspond to thought, being to seeming."[1]

To put the matter in another way, God was regarded as departmental, with His own domain to attend to, and that domain strictly limited to worship. Worship was not thought of as having any connection with the interests and occupations of life, but rather as an occupation reserved for a particular day as a

[1] J. L. Paton in *Cambridge Essays on Education*, p. 1.

tribute to respectability and convention. It is obvious that the twentieth century has not yet escaped from the clutches of the nineteenth in this respect. And the problem of the restoration of worship to its place in the life of the people is ultimately the problem of the renewal of their spiritual ideals, the rethinking of life and its every activity as an offering to God. Worship is only the highest and most deliberate expression of an attitude to life and to God without which mere attendance at services is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. The problem is to revive that attitude, and that means for many people a radical conversion.

My main concern, however, is not so much to point out our weaknesses as to consider how best this restoration of worship can be brought about. One thing is plain, which I have already hinted—namely, that the dominant note of our services must be reality. This has been emphasised again and again by those who had anything to do with our men in the war. I take a specimen utterance which puts the matter with complete candour:

"The sooner we realise that the men want thoroughness, reality, and candour, the better will it be for all. Perfunctory teaching by men who have never felt the cutting edge of the problem will be of no avail with the men who will really be the leaders of the generation after the war. Men who have seen their comrades dissolved by high explosives will want to know what are the reasons for believing in immortality and what is their present state. They will want to know why prayer in danger gave them such intense relief, and why it seemed so often to be unanswered. They will probably give the Churches a chance again in order to see if they have anything vital and comprehensible to say. If they do not get it from professional teachers of religion they will take their own road once more. We may be quite sure that most of them will not take their faith on mere authority, or be content with superficialities uttered by men who have never either in body or soul suffered along with them, or with them battled for faith in the wild revel of sin and death of these awful years."[1]

This has been corroborated by the information which many of my clergy have given me. Several speak of the continued aloofness from the Church of the ex-service men, though in some cases they are beginning to come back. Several speak of their critical attitude to religion and to the Church. Their minds have been ploughed up. New seeds of thought are germinating. Conventions have lost their force. They look at what they have been taught and at what the Church is teaching now with a certain suspicion, lest it should be unreal, yet with a wistful hopefulness in some cases that they may find something which satisfies. And it is certain that nothing will satisfy in the way of religion which does not co-ordinate and illuminate all depart-

[1] *The Army and Religion*, p. 276.

ments of experience and life. Among the criticisms directed at our worship is that it has been too detached. Men instinctively realise that an attitude of life expressed by word and gesture in the pew is, if it is real, expressed in business by strict rectitude, by kindliness and sympathy in social life, by all those virtues included in the mighty name of love. This is only to say that behaviour in common life must be consistent with behaviour in the sanctuary, and that worship which fails to express itself outside the church in these ways which are observable and measurable can have no reality inside the church where the observance is more private and personal. If, therefore, we desire a better state of things, this is where we have to begin. But apart from this there are points which need careful attention, and of some of these I desire to speak.

We need to cultivate the atmosphere of worship. This is as difficult to define as it is to secure, though its presence or absence is quite unmistakable. We can note certain matters which help towards it. The very appearance of the church, its arrangement, its furniture, its spaciousness (which does not necessarily imply size), its proportion, its colour—all these things affect this atmosphere more than can be described or imagined by some people. The moment one enters a church one gains an impression of worship or the reverse. The church which is a spiritual home, open all day, used during the week as a place of prayer, furnished with aids to devotion, which may be some simple arrangement of books in a shelf near the door, is as different as it can be from a church regarded for all practical purposes as non-existent on weekdays, and only coming into being on Sundays, preaching as loudly as a building can preach that religion is a departmental affair, and has no connection with the common days.

Most vital, needless to say, in the creation of this atmosphere is the priest himself. His business is to show God to men, and one way in which he can do this is by his demeanour in worship in such apparently unimportant details as punctuality, neatness, and dignity of attire and appearance. A clergyman cannot at the same time give an impression of the presence of God and of his own casualness and carelessness. Such matters as the use of his voice, the way he reads, slackness or fussiness in ceremonial, all have a potent bearing on the atmosphere. As one of my fellow-workers very aptly observes: "It ought to be as hard for a priest to conduct a service as for an actor to perform a part in a play. It is not, and everybody can see that it is not, and necessarily gets to feel that it is not a tremendous thing to approach God."

Not less vital in the creation of atmosphere is the congregation.

No one supposes that a number of people can act together effectively in industry or sport without some pains and training. Nor is it reasonable to expect that a congregation should be able to worship together without any corporate thought as to what it means or how to do it. For one thing, the worship of the Most High demands a corporate act of faith. It is to be regretted that among the sentences at the beginning of the service there is not our Lord's great promise to corporate worship, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name . . ." It is a psychological fact familiar to everyone that the mind of a number of people gathered together with one single purpose and converging on a single object is capable of developing a higher power of perception than that which any one of the individuals concerned could arrive at alone. A congregation, like an eight on the river, has to act together. Where this happens, both in the quiet sympathy which pervades the worshipping congregation and also in the stirring sound of united response or uplifting hymn, the effect is electric. But it never happens where the preposterous and deeply rooted notion prevails that the service is in some sense a spiritual entertainment offered to the worshipper rather than a call to him for the best that he can give. When this latter aspect of worship is grasped, when the service is understood to be a corporate enterprise of making contact with God, difficulties begin to be solved. Members will not absent themselves, because they know that they can bring a contribution to the service without which the other members of the family circle will be impoverished. The sight of a half-empty church itself lets down the spiritual temperature, whereas in a full church the atmosphere has already begun to be created before a word is said. Do not misunderstand me; I am not speaking of mere numbers, but of the sense of corporate responsibility which a congregation can develop, and without which its powers of worship will not go far.

This leads naturally to the mention of another element in corporate worship of immense potentiality for the atmosphere—namely, the music.[1] Music can sometimes make as conspicuous a contribution by its absence as by its presence. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of the part played in the service by the organist and choir. The revival which took its rise in the Oxford Movement has had the effect of making both more obtrusive than they need be. It has filled up the chancel with white-robed choirs, which is not necessarily any assistance either to the music or to the appearance of the church, and it has made

[1] For the whole subject see the publications of the Church Music Society, and also *Church Music*, by the Rev. A. S. Duncan-Jones.

a certain type of rather elaborate service the ideal which is aimed at far and wide, quite irrespective of the capacity of the choir to attain it. The golden rule is not to be too lavish with the music, but to let what music there is be simple and good. There is no department of Church life which is more under the iron heel of conservatism than this, more particularly hymns and hymn-tunes. An instance of this crabbed conservatism is the tenacity with which the practice of intoning is maintained. Intoning is probably necessary in large buildings if the voice is to reach every part. It is quite unnecessary in the average church. There are some clergymen who can intone well. There are others who would refuse to sing in a drawing-room for the very adequate reason that their voices are not good, but who do not hesitate to adventure themselves on the slippery slope of the inflexions in the versicles, and who are complacently oblivious of the stumbles and falls which ensue. It is no less difficult for a choir or congregation to intone, and the sooner this practice is stopped in the Confession and opening Lord's Prayer of the services, as well as in the Apostles' Creed, and the Prayer-Book injunction " to say *or* sing " is followed, the better it will be for all concerned.

We have a great tradition of English Church music which has been declared by competent authorities to be superior to that of any other nation. Unfortunately, even now, much of what is best in our storehouse remains untouched, while we feast ourselves on juicy and sugary morsels provided by Barnby, Stainer, and Dykes, not to mention some of a lower calibre. But the situation is far from hopeless. A reform movement in church music is beginning, and is fast gaining recruits among clergy and choirs. Its aim and intention is all on the side of regaining that which is natural and congregational. In the psalms, for instance, while I am not among those who regard the Anglican chant as the sum and climax of all that is ridiculous, I do not forget that the Church has evolved her own way of singing in days gone by, commonly called plainsong, in which everything is subordinated to the words, and which, though it has not made much headway at present in churches, can be extraordinarily solemn and moving in expressing the sacred poetry to which it is wedded. The grave difficulty of the Anglican chant, as used in most churches, is that it demands, in the first place, a high standard of four-part singing, and that the music is set within a rigid framework, to which the words are made to conform as best they may. It is possible, however, to use the Anglican chant in a way which in large measure emancipates the words, and it is possible to arrange the chanting so as to reveal,

and not conceal, the literary structure of the poem concerned. The judicious use of unison, of the two sides of the choir, or even of the solo voice, can transform the psalms from a monotonous set of verses into poems alive with meaning.

As to the hymns, there are few choirs as yet who show much sign of taking the trouble to sing them. By universal consent they are regarded as needing no such pains and preparation as are bestowed upon the anthem. Yet there are churches where the hymns are taken seriously. Indeed, we are at the beginning of a great revival of hymn-singing. The research behind a book like the *English Hymnal* has made available both words and tunes far more healthy and virile than most of those to which we are accustomed in other collections. Magnificent Welsh melodies are beginning to come to their own. The plainsong of Office hymns is not entirely unappreciated. Purely English tunes, the old folk melodies as well as some splendid tunes by modern composers, are becoming known and loved. Best of all, new methods—though, after all, they are but the methods of sense and taste—are making themselves felt. Among such are the use of unison; the division of a hymn between choir and congregation; in choirs and places where they can sing, the magnificent effect produced by what is known as *faux bourdon*. Not least of these benefits is that we are beginning to be emancipated from the superstition that a hymn must be sung in strict time, with no pause allowed at the end of the line. There is, for instance, a world of difference between the Old Hundredth sung in its original time and the Old Hundredth sung in strict common time, with all the notes of the same value and no pauses at all. Another tyranny from which we are being released is that of the expression marks which appear in most hymnals, which perhaps reaches the height of absurdity in the older editions of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

No discussion of the worship of the Church can be complete without some consideration of that which is the core and centre of the whole—namely, the prayers. It is not easy to exaggerate the beauty of the English Prayer-Book, and the value of a liturgy like ours. In our prayers we have an almost perfect expression of the great common needs of men. Yet often enough the very fact of familiarity, which is for many the greatest help towards intelligent worship, produces inattention, and when attention ceases worship ceases too. And we have been made aware during the last seven years that petitions centuries old are sometimes inadequate to cover modern circumstances. No one in his senses would wish to give up or even seriously to curtail the use of our Prayer-Book. The question of more elasticity centres

mainly in the provision of intercessions and thanksgivings and of simple services for special occasions, without interfering with the dignity of the prayers with which we are familiar. Many of my friends lay stress on this need, and many obviously endeavour to meet it in wise ways. One such way is the use of biddings to prayer at the Holy Communion. The invitation to pray for the Church is itself a suggestion that this is a suitable point for further biddings preceding the great intercession. Another opportunity is afforded by the prayers after the third Collect. Where these prayers have been used at Matins I should regard as legitimate an occasional use of special biddings to prayer in their place at Evensong. This is done most effectively, not by endeavouring to compose fresh Collects appropriate to the moment, but rather by announcing subjects for intercession, followed by a silence, and by the versicle and response, " O Lord, hear our prayer. And let our cry come unto Thee." The value of these silences in public worship is very great, and where a congregation is trained to use them they are exceedingly moving. It is a legitimate complaint against our services that we are too busy. The people are never let alone; something is always happening. The opportunity for such a silence as I suggest is precious, and should be more widely used. The people need training, both for silence and for articulate intercession. They should be encouraged to come to church, not only at set times for set services, but in groups at other times, to pray together in silence or with the informal help of some leader. It is a mistake to suppose that prayer can never be offered in church unless a clergyman is present. There were many occasions in the war when groups of women and girls met together for corporate prayer, and there is not the smallest reason why such occasions —whether for women or for men—should not be continued in peace.

Another appropriate moment for biddings to prayer is before the sermon. The use of the Bidding Prayer is enjoined upon the clergy by a canon of 1604, and it would often be far more edifying than the perfunctory invocation for which there is no sort of authority, and which, though entirely explainable in one sense as referring to the solemn commission of the preacher, is sometimes hardly justified by what follows. The old-fashioned plan of praying for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit seems to me at once more in accordance with the attitude of the speaker to his own words, and is more likely to prepare the hearts of the people to receive with meekness that word to the salvation of their souls. Nor is there the slightest need to be

tied and bound by the ascription of praise at the close. To end the sermon with a prayer is a custom for which there is good precedent, and many sermons would be thus more fittingly ended.

To come back to where I started, the main objective of all our worship. This is to make an avenue by which the members of Christ's family can worthily offer themselves to God, and conversely a means by which God and the character of God can be expressed to men. Upon this great objective the whole system converges, and each of the two great purposes is at once perfected and corrected by the other. We ought to make our worship so impressive, so appealing to eye and ear, to taste and temperament, that men may be constrained to the consecration of their best to God. Therefore, we call in the aid of art and music, of sign and symbol, of ceremonial and ritual. But any immoderate use of these helps is corrected by the other great purpose of our coming together. Of this symbol and that ritual, of this or that particular use of music, we ask, not merely, Does it help or hinder me in a right attitude? but Does it reveal God to anyone else? The test of a modern service is the same as it was in St. Paul's day, a test which perhaps not very many services as we know them would survive. "If there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed."[1] Where these great purposes are in any degree attained, where the whole service in all its details and all its completeness moves men towards God and manifests God moving towards them, the act of worship takes on an evangelistic character which is sometimes extraordinarily potent. We hear sometimes of people being put off by what goes on in church, but it is the very opposite effect which here I have in mind. Indeed, it may be questioned whether the atmosphere of reality in a church service does not do as much to convert those who are still hovering on the edge of the fellowship, or are outside it altogether, as any words which are spoken from the pulpit. We have, in fact, a great task before us, and a long road to travel. We have to release the services of our Church from those traditions of boredom and insincerity and lukewarmness, and I would add class-consciousness, with which they have been infected. We have to make them the greatest act at once of corporate humility and of corporate joy. We have to restore our worship to its rightful place as the highest expression of that which every

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

member of Christ, by virtue of his baptism, is pledged to give each day he lives. So far as we succeed in this we shall make our services what some of us have sometimes found them to be, a very foretaste of heaven. Each gathering together in the sanctuary will be an earnest of what St. Paul calls in that remarkable phrase, "our gathering together unto Him."

## III

## SACRAMENTS

If Christian worship, on one side, is a revelation of God, then it follows that the sacraments must be so in a peculiar sense. For we cannot separate worship from sacrament. Every attempt to do so has resulted in emptying worship of life and isolating the sacraments in an atmosphere of "magic," which may be a natural reaction against the exaggeration of their use as exclusive channels of Divine grace, but which ends in depriving them of all real significance. There are many ways in which the sacraments may be regarded, but if our view of them does not correspond with, and, indeed, constantly develop, our thought of the God who is their sole *raison d'être*, then there must be something imperfect in our use of them.

It is plain that from very early days certain ritual actions were regarded by the Church as peculiarly sacred, because they had been either commanded or used or sanctioned by our Lord. First among these was the breaking of bread, actually instituted and commanded by Him. There was the rite of baptism, enjoined in some of His parting instructions. There was the laying on of hands, used by the Lord Himself in healing and blessing, and adopted by the Apostles as the sign of the Spirit's action, both for the setting apart of the ministry and for the confirming of the baptised, as well as for the recovery of the sick and for a symbol of Divine forgiveness. And if the Church came to regard holy marriage as among the sacramental rites of the Church, it was wholly right and proper that the Faith which brought men into touch with God at birth and death, prepared them for His service, consecrated their lives, and sealed their repentance, should also hallow the greatest of human experiences by the demonstration of its Divine meaning and purpose. It was inevitable, after Christ came, that there should be sacraments. In His Incarnation He was Himself the supreme Sacrament of God. The sacramental system of the Church arose because of the way men thought about God in Christ, and it is necessary that from time to time we should bring our interpretation of that system to the same touchstone, and, fixing our

minds upon God's character as unveiled in Christ, compare the system with the source from whence it sprang.

That the need of ritual action in worship is a deep-rooted instinct in human nature is familiar to every student of comparative religion. Obviously, too, such ritual action is intended to be in some sense a reflection of the God who is being worshipped. That a bloodthirsty deity should induce the practice of human sacrifice, and that a god of fertility should be worshipped with orgies of passion, is not only natural, but even reasonable. We do not heighten the Christian conception of sacraments by denying the universal instinct which lies at the root of all sacramental worship to express the God to whom it is offered. Rather, a proper understanding of this fact only makes us the more thankful for the realities disclosed to us in the sacramental system of the Church, which is the fruit of the " sinless years " in Galilee long ago.

Three things stand out in the Christian sacraments, three facets of the great truth that God is love which lies behind them all. They show us the life-giving power of God, the fellowship of God, and the sacrifice of God. Dimly, indeed, if at all, these things were demonstrated in the old Jewish worship. The Old Testament ceremonial showed the majesty and holiness of God, His creative power and might, but it was left to the prophets—who probably created as much impression on the rank and file of worshippers as prophets do in these days—to point out that animal sacrifices and solemn assemblies and all the other paraphernalia of temple worship were utterly inadequate as an expression of the God whose word was blazing in their souls. Then Christ came, and the miracle happened for which the prophets had prepared the way. Men recognised in Him the eternal God. The fictitious picture of a God who took pleasure in the blood of animals and the pompous posturing of unspiritual priests faded away before the dazzling revelation of a God who was like Christ—a God so loving to His creation that a sparrow could not die outside His love, and whose moral sincerity was such that He put a higher value upon a penitent harlot or a humble publican than upon any pillar of the Church whose actions did not keep pace with his words. And when that radiant human Personality had passed through His eclipse and reappeared, having shaken off the powers of sin and death, they realised at last that God, so far from demanding from them the old animal sacrifices, was all the time sacrificing Himself for them, that He was one with them in every experience of life, that the great activity of God was not receiving, but giving—giving power, life, Himself, in a passion of love such as had only been dimly dreamt of before.

Our Lord knew how hard it would be for His followers to keep this new and glorious idea always before them, so He gave to the daily rite of taking and receiving food for bodily sustenance the eternal significance of His self-giving, and the incorporation of the Divine into human life. That this elemental simplicity of the institution has become the most complicated of theological problems, and that the act of obedience is a battle-ground of His followers, is one of the tragedies of history. The real validity of a sacrament is in its power truly to express God in Christ, and if it does not do that it is less adequate for its purpose than even heathen worship, which at least conveys a convincing impression of its unpleasant deity.

In view of this aspect of the sacraments which I have particularly in mind it is important to notice how close in the early Church was the connection between the sacraments and the work of the Holy Spirit, that latest and most intimate coming of God into human life. The sacraments were regarded as the direct working of God the Spirit on things material to make them the expression and vehicle of things spiritual.

"The sacramental teaching of the ancient Church writers loses the appearance of exaggeration which attaches to it in the judgment of many modern believers when it is viewed in the light of the ancient doctrine of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Men who held that the Creator Spirit, who is the living energy of God, dwells in the Holy Catholic Church and is operative in her ministerial acts could find no words adequate to express their sense of the greatness of His work in the sacraments. To magnify the sacraments was to magnify the Divine Spirit, who lived and worked in the Body of Christ."[1]

We have yet to think out a clear theology of the Holy Spirit in relation to the sacraments, but at every point this need appears, and a truer understanding of this aspect of sacramental worship would have saved the Church from many exaggerations and limitations.

God in these three activities—giving life, making fellowship, and sacrificing Himself—is implicit in greater or less degree in every sacrament. The more the subject is considered the more there is to learn about Him in this way. Each sacrament in turn shows Him forth. His life-giving power is peculiarly demonstrated in the sacrament of Holy Baptism. It is the sacrament of that creative activity of the Spirit which takes human lives in hand, and never leaves them till the Father's image is restored, until the life itself becomes a very reflection of the beauty of God. There is the little child. But for God's creative activity towards it in physical life it would not be there. But now a higher and

[1] Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, p. 399.

deeper activity of God comes into view. God reaches out to the life and includes it and draws it into the family circle of His redeemed. Before the little one can take any responsible action God is seen in loving action towards it. Baptism is a demonstration of the fundamental fact of religion that He first loved us, and because of that we love Him. Whatever action we may be capable of towards God in life or service, God was there first, God began it, God inspired it. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Yet, as always, no activity of God avails without the conscious response of its objects, and in this case there is in truth a double response. There is the vicarious response of the little child made through its godparents, and there is later on the personal response made in confirmation. It is impossible to exaggerate the closeness of the connection which there has always been in the Church between baptism and confirmation. In the early days, when adult baptism was, in the nature of things, normal, they were frequently simultaneous. In fact, the interval of time which gradually arose between baptism and confirmation was not so much the postponement of confirmation as the growth of the practice of infant baptism, and when the separation began there was a tendency in some quarters to identify the bestowal of the Spirit even more with confirmation than with baptism. "Those who are baptised in the Church," says Cyprian, "are brought to the rulers of the Church, that by our prayer and the imposition of our hand they may obtain the Holy Spirit and be perfected with the seal of the Lord." In fact, in the judgment of this famous Bishop, confirmation is essentially the sacrament of the Spirit.

It is a peculiarity of the Church of England that we have separated confirmation so far from baptism as to make it a spiritual coming of age of the candidate. In view of the formality with which, I fear it must be confessed, infant baptism is often administered among us, confirmation becomes the more important, and from this point of view the age of the candidate is a very serious question. On this subject I am not prepared to issue a dictum other than the rule already in vogue in the diocese. Obviously, in modern circumstances, it would be inadvisable to attempt to restore confirmation to its original close connection with baptism, for this would be to deprive the Church and the candidates of the priceless opportunity of a public and personal profession of their faith and the dedication of their lives to the service of God. Nor can the child of very tender years adequately grasp the central meaning of confirmation—namely, his equipment by the Holy Ghost for responsible service in the Kingdom of God; in fact, his lay ordination to the

ministry of witness which in the purpose of Christ each of His members ought to exercise. There is much to be said for the administration of confirmation at the time which in the life of the lad or girl coincides with their assuming economic responsibility for their own livelihood. Considerations connected with physiology and psychology seem to throw doubt on the suitability of those years between thirteen and sixteen which have been, I suppose, most widely accepted in our Church as the best period. I am disposed to think that the real choice lies between a decidedly earlier age and a later one. From the point of view, and a very serious one, of anchoring the child in the full life of the fellowship, the earlier age has much to recommend it. The individual who becomes a regular communicant at eleven or twelve, and who with the habits of adult membership fixed becomes gradually further enlightened by the Holy Spirit as he grows older, is probably less likely to lapse than if he were confirmed later. On the other hand, looked at from the point of view of the deliberate assumption in full view of life, its temptations and its opportunities, of all that adult membership in the Great Society ought to mean, and bearing in mind the opportunities of attaining a spiritual and intellectual grasp of these things which the preparation involves, and which is never repeated, there is much to be said for the later age. It all depends upon the point of view and the circumstances of the candidate. Both, to my mind, are entirely legitimate, and the final decision must depend partly upon the life of the parish, but most upon the child himself and his circumstances. Assuming the fellowship of the Church in any place is as warm and compact and educative as it ought to be, the earlier age would seem to be the more appropriate, but it is equally true that the presence of these conditions is the only justification for later confirmation. As to the period of preparation, nothing can exceed the greatness of the opportunity which is here presented. No period can be too long; in fact, one of the wisest answers that was given to my question about the preparation was given by the clergyman who replied that his time of preparation was about eleven years. It is, indeed, obvious that the Sunday-school or Catechism or class, to say nothing of the services, ought to afford such an environment to the children of the parish that confirmation comes as a natural and inevitable incident in their progress in the spiritual life, a progress which, through wise methods of after-care, continues as steadfastly after confirmation as before.

But to return to Holy Baptism. The child is brought into the fellowship of the Church. Infant baptism can only be justified on the assumption that the child's environment from

that moment will be definitely Christian, that the little life shall develop in such a way that confirmation follows as its perfectly natural and inevitable outcome. It is partly because we have so largely lost the sense of corporate life in the Church that baptism has become, not a great and solemn family function—and here I speak of the Divine Family—but a hole-and-corner affair, regarded, to judge from the way it is often conducted, as a matter wholly out of contact with the life of the Church at large, and concerning nobody but the relations immediately involved. I would emphasise the importance of making opportunities for explaining this great meaning of baptism beforehand to the parents and others. In this respect circumstances differ, no doubt, as between town and country. The spirit of the rubric should be obeyed which directs that where there are children to be baptised the parents shall give knowledge thereof overnight or in the morning before Morning Prayer to the curate. The extension of this notice to three days or more is not difficult after due warning, though in a town or a district where this and other reforms are concerned it is essential that the parishes should act together. As a fact, the regulation that notice should be demanded before a baptism gives opportunity for a pastoral visit of the most valuable kind, bringing a unique opportunity for explaining the meaning of the family life of the Church of God. Nor is this the only instance in which it is important that the rubrics should be obeyed. I am thinking now of the direction of the Prayer-Book as to the publicity of the service. The present practice, as I have said, is due to a radical failure to appreciate what the corporate life of the beloved community ought to mean. To connive at baptism being merely a private affair is to endorse a false individualism to which our people are too sadly prone, and to hide the greatness of the Church's social solidarity, which, as I shall venture to point out later, is one of the lessons which our people most need to learn. Most emphatically is this true of adult baptism. This should always be in a public service. To allow otherwise is to deprive the congregation of a service which is more moving in its reminder of the responsibility of membership than many sermons. In early days such services, when we remember what they must have meant often enough in the loss of social status and even family affection, must have been awful and inspiring to the last degree. We are, in fact, in a vicious circle. The sense of corporate life and the responsibility of membership loses by the fact that so few baptisms take place in public. In like manner we negative in this way one of the chief methods of exciting and strengthening that very sense. For if baptism is the revelation

of the character of God, then that revelation ought to be made as publicly and as impressively as is possible.[1]

The fellowship activity of God is again demonstrated most plainly in Holy Matrimony. In a true sense, according to the teaching of St. Paul, marriage is a sacrament. It portrays the essential fellowship between Christ and His body, the Church. It and the family life which results are the outward and visible sign of the essential socialness of God. There was never greater need for study and teaching on this subject in pulpit and school than there is now. *Qua* citizen a man may look on marriage as a merely civil contract, regulated by the State. But if the man is a member of Christ's body as well, he looks on the matter from a vastly different point of view. It is from this point of view that we must regard the modern agitation for easier divorce. We can understand why our Lord made the one exception in the universal rule of the indissolubility of marriage, for in the exception named the sacramental act on its physical side is itself prostituted, and therein the fundamental idea of a loyal and life-long fellowship is destroyed. The number of divorces which have been and are being applied for would hardly suggest the necessity for further laxity in this direction. But the Church's remedy is not mere agitation against Acts of Parliament. It is positive teaching on marriage as part and parcel of that wonderful system which we call sacramental, and in which the eternal and real is always manifesting itself in the visible and material. Such teaching with anything like regularity has been, I believe, conspicuously absent in our parishes, and for the unworthy ideas of marriage abroad to-day we must be content to bear a not inconsiderable share of blame. I say, therefore, that in Holy Marriage the essential fellowship in God shines out in human life.

Sacramental, too, in this large and lofty sense, is the Ministry of the Church. Bishops, priests, and deacons are not officials imposed on the people from outside. They are a divinely ordained manifestation of those qualities of priesthood and mutual helpfulness which are inherent in the whole congregation of Christ's flock. They are set apart, not to lord it over God's heritage, but to represent God to the people, to proclaim His love, making real in human contact His fatherly care. In like manner they represent the people to God, pleading for them in prayer, leading them in worship. In this view a Bishop ought to be in ideal a sacrament of the fatherhood of God, and every

[1] I desire in this respect to commend to the diocese and to endorse a report made in the Rural Deanery of Christianity in 1917, and to direct that its main recommendations shall be acted upon as soon as the clergy in the various Deaneries can agree on such a common course of action.

priest ought to be a demonstration in life and work of the brotherhood of Jesus Christ. Further, if the fellowship is broken by sin and wrong, there are sacramental ways of restoring it. God's plan to deliver man from sin, wrought out on the cross and completed on the throne, leaps to sight and hearing as the word of absolution is pronounced, whether in public or in private. For all her members our Church provides this public sacramental emancipation from sin. For those of her members who need it and desire it, she provides the same for the individual, whether in more informal pastoral intercourse or in formal confession and absolution. One reason why our sense of fellowship in these days is so dim is that we take so little trouble to restore it when it is broken. The first requisite for the communicant is that he should examine himself. Our people need more help in this. Public self-examination conducted in church by the leader of the parish might be more frequently used than it is. Private self-examination, to judge by the ordinary manuals, is not always wisely guided, for it often lays more stress on sins committed than on the good which is left undone, the positive output of life and character. The outward and visible signs of penitence—our attitude in church, the words which we say in confession—need to be more truly reflected in the inward spiritual attitude, which alone can lead us to that absolution which looses men from sins, habits, tyrannies, and links them up afresh in the glorious fellowship to which they belong. And this emancipation extends to the body as well as the soul, as we are gradually discovering. I have read lately of marvellous scenes in India, where, as in the olden days, the sick and impotent folk have been gathered and hands laid upon them, with wonderful results, always to soul and often to body as well. I have known cases much nearer home where, as a result of a corporate act of faith and prayer, cases of apparently hopeless illness have been transformed by the laying on of hands and the anointing in the name of the Lord. We have so long lost any belief in the sacramental healing of men's bodies that we shall only regain it after much study and thought and prayer, and reverent ventures of faith.

But it is in the Holy Communion, the sacrament instituted by our Lord Himself, that we have the fullest revelation of God. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." God's sacrifice is perpetually commemorated in the giving and receiving of the bread and wine. This sacrificial aspect of the service was recognised and prominent from the first. Ignatius speaks of the Christian assembly as a sanctuary or place of sacrifice

and of the thank-offering which there is offered. Justin speaks of the bread of the Eucharist as offered as a memorial of the Passion. The precise nature of the sacrifice the early Church, feeling its mystery and greatness, hesitated to define. Even as late as the thirteenth century the great theologians declined a precise definition. Obviously, it was closely connected with the bread broken and the wine poured out, but these were part of the great Oblation, and a literally material oblation of the faithful at the service. The doctrine of transubstantiation led not unnaturally to many definitions arrived at by that kind of logic which is fatal where the mysteries of God are concerned. Even the Council of Trent, as Pusey wrote in 1865, "in laying down the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass, claims nothing for the Holy Eucharist but an application of the one meritorious sacrifice of the cross." But the sacrifice of Christ's body on the cross includes the sacrifice of His mystical Body, the Church. And it is this sacrifice, the offering of the bodies of His people for His service, that our Church emphasises in the great Prayer of Oblation, and which must always be regarded as inseparable from the other. Personally, I sympathise with those who feel that the true sacrificial view of the Eucharist is more worthily expressed in the canon of the First Prayer-Book of King Edward VI., and I sympathise with those who desire to link the Prayer of Oblation with the Prayer of Consecration in the present Office, though, unless and until this is authorised by the Church, we cannot claim to use any personal discretion in the matter. My point just now, however, is that this primary activity of God coming out in active love and sacrifice is placed before us with amazing vividness, which, if we were not so accustomed to it, we should more deeply appreciate, in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. It is, indeed, the outward demonstration that all true life, if it is to be available for others, must be offered in sacrifice. Nature proclaims it, every mother proclaims it, every true lover of men proclaims it, but most of all God proclaims it, once for all on the cross, again and again at every Eucharist.

Nothing is more striking in the Church life of the present day than the revival of the centralness, if I may say so, of the Eucharist as the supreme meeting-place of God and man, the place where in awful and wonderful ways each is unveiled to the other. For there, indeed, is manifested the glory of God, but it is a God to whom all hearts be open and from whom no secrets are hid. But this new realisation of the greatness of the Holy Communion is only beginning to grow. Particularly in villages, the notion still obtains that the service is an extra,

that it is intended for the spiritually élite, that for the layman the three attendances prescribed by the Prayer-Book are sufficient, and even that for most people two or three attendances after confirmation will suffice. To those familiar with a well-organised town parish this may seem almost incredible. But such notions do prevail, and the way to combat them, I am persuaded, is not by denunciation, or by repeated statements of their inadequacy, but rather by making the parish into such a fellowship as shall find its natural and inevitable expression in the Holy Communion. The Holy Communion is the demonstration, in a solemn act, of that fellowship which should pervade the parish on all days and at all times. In the earliest days it was a literal fellowship of food, and an opportunity for supplying the needs of the poorer brethren. In St. Paul's thought the whole celebration has the character of a sacred meal. It is a supper of the Lord. I should like to hear of more instances of communions in villages, or even in towns, in which the worshippers join together in a common meal when the service is over. For this not only emphasises the social aspect of the sacrament, but meets a practical difficulty where the parish is scattered. To speak of a corporate communion is merely a repetition of words, for no communion can be other than corporate if it is true to the norm of the New Testament and the early Church. We cannot expect to make the Holy Communion real while the fellowship feeling in our parishes is so lamentably lacking. To imagine that this can be effected merely by increasing the number of celebrations or by introducing a sung Eucharist is a delusion. Frequent celebrations and a sung Eucharist are a demonstration of the fellowship movement of the Spirit in the parish, but the movement must come first if they are to be real to the people.

It is this fellowship notion which lies at the root of the practice of reservation for the sick.[1] It is the means of assuring the sick, who cannot be in the sanctuary, of their oneness in the great fellowship act. It is analogous to the practice which obtained in early days at Rome, when the Eucharist which had been consecrated by the Bishop in the central church was sent to the presbyters of the several churches throughout the city. The reason, indeed, given by Pope Innocent I. for the practice is that those who cannot be in the central church "might not think that they were

[1] In accordance with the resolution passed by the Upper House of our Convocation, as my brethren know, I am prepared to give permission for this in the diocese in parishes where circumstances make it advisable, but by no means as superseding the definite rule of the Prayer-Book as to private celebrations where the sick person desires it.

separate from communion with us." But widely different from this, and with a totally different object, is the modern Roman practice commonly known as the cult of the reserved sacrament. This is the use of the sacrament, not for the extension of the fellowship to the sick, but as a material point in which permanently the presence of Christ may be localised. For my part I do not criticise this practice because it is Roman, for I maintain that the Church of England ought to claim the use of all methods of devotion which she deems to be Scriptural and Catholic, from whatsoever source they may be drawn. I test it by the touchstone of the whole sacramental system—namely, is it truly a demonstration of the character of God? And, first, I note that it is intimately connected with the doctrine of transubstantiation, a doctrine not only based on a false and obsolete philosophy, but in fundamental contradiction to the whole sacramental principle—namely, that while the inward and spiritual shines through the outward and visible, it does not absorb it or destroy it. But, further, if God is like Christ, can we suppose that this is a method of revealing His presence which He would be likely to have instituted or countenanced? That He connected His Divine presence with the solemn act of the breaking of bread is indeed beyond doubt; if the presence is ever real it is there; but it is not on that account permanently visible. The scene at Emmaus is surely recorded precisely to teach us this. For while it emphasises the utter realness of the presence in most intimate connection with the elements offered and consecrated, it also teaches just as plainly that the presence is normally invisible and spiritual. The Lord was outwardly and sacramentally revealed. He was there before their eyes. But no sooner had the unveiling been made than He vanished out of their sight. Thereby He impressed upon them that the sacrament was a flaming forth into sight and touch of that which was always theirs at every hour and in every place—His Divine companionship. For thirty years, in the mercy of God, the Divine presence on earth was localised. Then, when the great acts were done, the lessons taught, the fellowship founded, it became expedient that He should go away. The practice to which I have referred seems perilously like an attempt to go behind all this, and to use the blessed sacrament for a purpose for which it was not intended—to prolong or to reproduce the material presence which now, in the dispensation of the Spirit, has been withdrawn. This line of thought surely is confirmed by the experience of the early Church. So intimate, so abounding, so enabling was the sense of Christ's presence in the fellowship and in the hearts of His people, that any attempt thus

materially to produce it would have seemed not only superfluous, but a lowering of the spiritual heights to which the Church had attained. It is inconceivable, in view of His whole outlook and teaching, that He could have desired a materialised or localised presence of the Father. It is equally inconceivable that the little company under the leadership of Simon Peter, or any of the little companies founded later on by St. Paul, could have desired or experienced any material substitute for the perennial sense of Christ's companionship and their own ineffable union with Him. During His earthly ministry He had been, if you like, a prisoner in the tabernacle of His flesh, but after the eternal sacrifice was offered and He rose from the dead, He burst the material bonds, and in the person of the Holy Spirit became available at all times and in every place. It is difficult to see how, in the long run, the ideas behind this cult of the reserved sacrament can consort with New Testament teaching on the Holy Spirit, and it is worthy of note that it is in that part of the Church where the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is notably weak that the practice tends to prevail. I would hazard the conjecture that the Epiclesis, which personally I should like to see restored in our canon, is the instinctive recognition of the fact that it is impossible and unscriptural to speak of the true presence of our Lord after Pentecost save in connection with the Spirit whom He sends in His name.

On the other hand, the Eucharist is the supreme act of worship, and this view of it we must hold in conjunction with the fellowship view to which I have just referred. It is an act of worship, because it demonstrates the Lord's death before God and angels and men. It is an adoration of the Lamb that was slain and an act of union with His sacrifice. Not less is it the offering of His mystical Body and of its members in worship and service. The sacrament is, indeed, so great that at no one celebration can we touch more than the fringe of its wonder. At one celebration we may seek to emphasise the pleading of the death, at another we may emphasise the fellowship, at another the act of worship, but in no one Eucharist should any one of these elements be eliminated. For instance, in a Eucharist where emphasis is laid on the act of worship, it is natural that many should be present who may have communicated at an earlier celebration. While no one in these days desires so to emphasise fellowship, as apart from worship, as to insist that every person present shall communicate, it is not Scriptural or advisable to eliminate the communicants altogether, nor is it in accordance with the wise rule of our Prayer-Book. To do this is to have a Eucharist denuded of its most characteristic feature—namely,

fellowship. The emphasis in any given service may vary, but I would plead that at no Eucharist in my diocese should any one of the tremendous aspects be set on one side altogether. You cannot eliminate any one aspect of the character of God, and if the Eucharist is the exhibition of that character, then we must be careful how we keep the Feast.

I have ventured to dwell so long on this great subject of the sacraments as the revelation of the character of God, because I would constrain my brethren, if I could, to detach themselves, as I have tried to detach myself, from all party points of view or prejudice of past association, and to look at the whole great question anew in the light of Christ's exhibition of God, and of that Divine activity which, shining forth in the sacraments, is at once the energy of the Church and the hope of the world.

## IV

## REUNION

The supreme reason for reunion is the character of God. Our present state of disunion obscures that character. Men cannot see God, but they can see the Church. Rightly and naturally they argue from the Church to God. When the Church was one, a compact fellowship standing for righteousness and truth, the argument was satisfactory. The Church was in large measure the expression of God. But now the argument collapses, for the sight of the Church is not such as to suggest the character of God. If God is one, if God is light, if God is love, it is not because of, but in spite of, the conclusions which you might draw from looking at His body, the Church. In these days of the world's need God's character can only be adequately expressed by a reunited Church. It is this which makes the task involved so urgent, and which brands with criminal indolence those Christians who do not bestir themselves for its achievement.

The subject, of course, is far from new. It was in the Lambeth Conference of 1888 that the famous Quadrilateral, as it came to be called, was first put forward, and it is certain that for its Appeal to all Christian People in regard to this great subject the conference of 1920 will mainly be remembered. In former days the ideal of unity was often partial, and even narrow. So far as our own Church was concerned, union with Rome was ruled out as unthinkable and even undesirable. As to the Nonconformist bodies, opinion seemed to be more concerned with the way in which they might be reunited to the Church of England than with any larger vision of a united Church to which all might contribute. Whatever the Lambeth Conference of 1920 succeeded or failed to do in regard to reunion, it at least unveiled to Christendom at large a vision which lights up the horizon and makes the distant goal more plain, though differing opinions may be held as to the ways by which it can best be reached.

One of the pamphlets issued during the war bore this significant title: *Wanted, a Catholic Church.* It was this need, felt in all its depth, that moved the conference. There is,

indeed, a Catholic Church of which we are all proud to be members, but it is wounded, torn, dislocated, inexpressibly below its possible efficiency as the Body of Christ and the vehicle of His Spirit. There is a Catholic Church in the mind of God, but as we learn from the Incarnation, whatever is in the mind of God, so far as this world is concerned, craves outward form and expression. The ideal Catholic Church, therefore, still waits to get beyond its partial realisation to that world-wide united expression which, in view of our Lord's prayer, we cannot but believe must come. Even to those who are only indirectly concerned with religion, the ideal of a really Catholic Church is irresistibly attractive. "The ideal of the Catholic Church," says Mr. Wells, "is charged with synthetic suggestion; it is in many ways broader and finer than the constructive idea of any existing State." And this appreciation leaves him under no delusions as to the tremendous task of reconstruction which must be faced if a Holy Catholic Church is to be recovered.

"There was an attempt at a reformation in the Catholic Church, and through a variety of causes it failed. It detached great masses from the Catholic Church, and left that organisation impoverished spiritually and intellectually; but it achieved no reconstruction at all. It achieved no reconstruction because the movement as a whole lacked an adequate grasp of one fundamentally necessary idea, the idea of catholicity. It fell into particularism and failed. It set up a vast process of fragmentation among Christian associations. It drove huge fissures through the once common platform. . . . The reformation, the reconstruction of the Catholic Church, lies still before us. It is a necessary work. It is a work strictly parallel to the reformation and expansion of the organised State. Together these processes constitute the general duty before mankind."

But if this piece of reconstruction, colossal as it is, is the general duty before mankind, it is the special duty before the Church. At no time in her history since the Reformation has this been more keenly realised than it is at the present time. Christians in every land, and not least here in Britain, are beset with the uncomfortable conviction which, like St. Paul's thorn in the flesh, harasses them at every turn—that their witness to Christ is paralysed, their energy clogged, their exhibition of God blurred and defaced, the enterprise for the capture of the nations continually frustrated, by a state of disunion for which they were not themselves responsible, whose causes have in large measure disappeared, and whose continued obtrusiveness is alike an offence to God and a stumbling-block to men.

That our present state of disunion is flat contrary to the character and purpose of God I take to be a proposition which no thoughtful Christian will dispute. I say "no thoughtful Christian," for it is true, I fear, that great numbers of the rank

and file of our Churches have never stopped to think the matter out. They will say a fervent Amen to any general sentiment which deplores the present situation, but with that inexpensive expression of opinion they pass to the next subject which claims their attention. But there can be no true comfort for Christendom while these gaping wounds in the Body of Christ remain unhealed, and our first duty is to bring that fact home in season and out of season to the minds and consciences of our people. I come back, then, to the Appeal issued by the Bishops, for any Bishop or leader of our Church who speaks about reunion in these days must perforce take the Lambeth vision as his ideal, must try to unfold its meaning, and in the light of it discuss the methods by which it may be realised.

I would have you note at the outset that this Appeal in which the Bishops have attempted to portray their vision is the most official document that could possibly have emanated from the communion to which we belong. It is not the result of one of those friendly meetings between the Church and other bodies with which mercifully we have become familiar. It is not the official contribution of the home Bishops, who might have chiefly in view those bodies of Christians from which they are separated. It is the result of the prayer and thought and deliberation of Bishops who endeavoured to envisage the whole world and its problems, who were responsible for the outlook and administration of our Church in every variety of race and country, who were faced with various projects of reunion widely differing among different nations and Churches, and who therefore were compelled to think out some frame for the great picture which would enclose every part of it. Those persons, therefore, who insist upon testing the project solely by its application to reunion at home must remember that there are other persons in the United States, in South India, in Australia, and elsewhere, who are looking at it from their own points of view, and any one standpoint must be ready to be corrected by the others. I would emphasise further that the whole Appeal hangs together, and that no part of it—as, for example, that part which deals with ordination—can with propriety or even honesty be isolated and dealt with as though it were a separate project. The vision that we saw then was, I venture to say, the vision of a truly Catholic Church. To adopt a phrase used sometimes in industrial circles in a widely different connection, there is contemplated one big union, one great family circle, in which all groups, with all their gifts and idiosyncrasies, so far as they are in accordance with the mind of Christ, would find a place. The plan may be criticised, but at least it covers the whole of Christendom. If

put in action to-morrow with the willing and self-sacrificing concurrence of the Churches concerned, it could heal the wounds of the whole body.

I say one big family circle, and this means obviously a visible unity. I read the words of the Appeal:

"The time has come, we believe, for all the separated groups of Christians to agree in forgetting the things which are behind and reaching out towards the goal of a reunited Catholic Church. The removal of the barriers which have arisen between them will only be brought about by a new comradeship of those whose faces are definitely set this way.

"The vision which rises before us is that of a Church, genuinely Catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship all who profess and call themselves Christians, within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole body of Christ. Within this unity Christian communions now separated from one another would retain much that has long been distinctive in their methods of worship and service. It is through a rich diversity of life and devotion that the unity of the whole fellowship will be fulfilled."

This means, I repeat, a visible unity, and, indeed, no other would be of the smallest use. It is not even conceivable. Nothing smaller can ever be adequate in view of the world's need and the Church's opportunity. It is hardly necessary to refer at length to the New Testament in this connection. The Acts and the Epistles are simply brimming with this ideal—nay, rather, this experience of the one fellowship. Nor could we conceive it otherwise in the society which, however faintly, reflects God. When God set out to deal with mankind, He became visible, tangible, definite, in Jesus Christ. Man could say of that manifestation, not "we felt this sentiment" or "we were inspired with that idea," but "we beheld His glory." If so, it is natural, and indeed inevitable, that the society which is Christ's body should be similarly visible, tangible, and definite. This notion of the Church was universal in the early days. Clement of Alexandria, for instance, represents the first three centuries of Christian history when he uses these words:

"The one Church, which they strive to break up into many sects, is bound up with the principle of unity. We say that the ancient and Catholic Church stands alone in essence and idea and principle and pre-eminence."[1]

When the Christians of Smyrna sent an account of the martyrdom of the Bishop to the other Christian communions in the

[1] Swete, *The Holy Catholic Church*, p. 35.

Empire, they addressed their communication to "all the communities of the Holy Catholic Church in every place."[1]

There is ample reason to believe that this ideal of unity is one which commends itself to almost every part of the Church. It is the very breath of life to Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, and Anglo-Catholics. Nonconformist leaders of many denominations have made it plain that it is theirs. It was explicitly proclaimed at the great Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, in which so many Churches were represented. "Unity," so says the report which was unanimously adopted by the conference, "must be something richer, grander, more comprehensive, than anything which we can see at present. It is something into which and up to which we must grow, something of which and for which we must become worthy." And, again, "While we may differ from one another in our conception of what unity involves and requires, we agree in believing that our Lord intended that we should be one in a visible fellowship." "The realisation of this ideal," so the report continues, "and the difficulties to be surmounted may be overwhelmingly great, but it is something to have felt the stirring of a hope so rich and wonderful."

But there is more up-to-date testimony than that. We have only to mark the words of the report of the committee appointed by the Free Churches of England in regard to the Lambeth Appeal. I quote some sentences from this important document:

"This fellowship, which is the Church, gives visible expression to its corporate life in common faith, order, and worship; and to it belongs the vocation of witnessing for Christ and of winning the world for Him, and thus bringing in the Kingdom of God."

"That all who name the Name of Christ should be united—and that visibly—is a Christian ideal which we would pursue with all who will seek with us to learn and to carry out His will regarding it."

"We therefore on our part desire to set before ourselves anew the vision of the one visible Church Catholic of Christ; and if we have not always been moved by this in the past—to account for which many historical reasons might be given—all the more would we now think, labour, and pray for its realisation."

Whether this ideal commends itself to the rank and file of the Churches represented is very doubtful, but at least the leaders have subscribed to it without hesitation. Nor can we be altogether sure of our own members. Only too many clergymen as well as laymen, whatever they may say, are content to go on as we are, uttering pious platitudes about a reunion which they do not expect, nor indeed particularly wish to see. No man who will give five minutes to thinking out what the achievement

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

of the ideal would mean to the world in these days—one mighty society pledged to the principles of Christ—can fail to be thrilled and solemnised at such a possibility, or to feel constrained to whatever lies in his power towards its realisation.

We must now advance further into this great temple and look around for the conditions which such unity would involve. Again I quote from the Appeal:

"We believe that the visible unity of the Church will be found to involve the whole-hearted acceptance of:

"The Holy Scriptures, as the record of God's revelation of Himself to man, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith; and the Creed commonly called Nicene, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal confession of belief.

"The divinely instituted sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion, as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ.

"A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body."

As regards the first mark of this unity, the whole-hearted acceptance of the Holy Scriptures, no serious difficulty need be anticipated. The Church which refused to stand on such a foundation would be uncatholic indeed. Nor, probably, would there be much more difficulty as regards the acceptance of the Creed, commonly called Nicene, as a sufficient statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the baptismal confession of faith. In the great historic Churches, of course, no difficulty would be found, and in many nonconformist Churches the difficulty would appear to be less than might have been expected. I quote some welcome words in this regard from the important commentary to which I have already referred:

"We fully realise the value of the ancient creeds. . . . We are convinced, therefore, that Free Churchmen generally would be able to give as whole-hearted an acceptance to the Christian faith underlying these creeds as do their Anglican brethren."

In view of this, whatever difficulties might arise with smaller Churches of a more strictly confessional kind, it seems that, so far as the larger bodies are concerned, agreement would not be difficult. More serious difficulties will arise in regard to the third mark of unity—namely, "a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body." That this ministry must mean episcopacy in some form is not only urged in the Appeal, but has been

agreed to by the important sub-committee appointed by the Archbishops' Committee and by representatives of the Free Churches' Commissions in connection with the World Conference on Faith and Order. This united committee has put on record its conviction that "continuity with the historic episcopate should be effectively preserved."

It may be well to clear the ground at the outset, and to say that in proposing the episcopate as the one means of providing such a universally acknowledged ministry, the Appeal does not commit itself to any particular setting of episcopacy, as, for example, that with which we are most familiar in the Church of England, where the Church is established, where Bishops have seats in the State legislature, and where the method of their appointment is, to say the least, open to criticism. These are of the accidents, not the essence of the office. Nor is it suggested that episcopacy should necessarily be on the same semi-autocratic lines with which we are familiar. On the contrary, it is expressly urged that there should be a renewal of constitutional government and a reversion to the system whereby the Bishop is no longer a more or less absolute monarch, but a president acting in full consultation with his co-presbyters. It requires a real effort for every churchman, let alone nonconformist, to clear his mind of these prepossessions and prejudices in regard to episcopacy. Where it is urged in the Appeal it is urged in its Scriptural and primitive form, not in the development to which, in the Church of England in particular, it has attained. That being so, its main recommendations are that it supplies a link with the past, affords a guarantee of real unity, and is the most valuable form of Church government known to experience. Here we reach the centre and core of the whole enterprise, for we are hereby compelled to face the question which every Church must face if any progress is to be made—namely, What kind of unity do we want? Do we want a real family circle, or are we to be content with something short of that? What are the alternatives to the kind of unity suggested in the Appeal? There are two at least which have to be considered. One is amalgamation. This must mean the absorption of all the Churches concerned by one of them, perhaps the largest or the most influential. This plan needs only to be stated for its impracticabilities to be apparent. No Church wishes to be absorbed, and no Church with an adequate idea of unity would wish to absorb another. For one thing, it would mean, in effect, a loss to the whole body of whatever gifts or experience might be contributed by the weaker member. The member thus submerged would lose just that distinction of outlook or capacity

which, under a different scheme, might be conserved for the whole united society. So far as the Anglican Church is concerned, the Bishops assembled at Lambeth expressly repudiated any such notion. "We do not ask"—these are their words—"that any one communion should consent to be absorbed in another." On the other hand, where, as in Scotland, you have two Churches practically identical in creed and government, amalgamation, or something like it, is the obvious plan, and in these circumstances the Churches concerned have everything to gain.

But there is another way of effecting unity, and in some respects a more attractive one—namely, by federation. Why not, it may be asked, recognise the fact that there are many Christian Churches, differing in faith and order, claiming a complete independence of each other, and that these Churches, though standing for different aspects of faith, and working on different lines, might well be linked together by some kind of nexus which, while respecting the liberty of each community, would do something at least to prevent overlapping and to increase that mutual friendliness which we desire to cultivate? This plan, of course, has great attractions. If it were put in practice throughout Christendom it would go far to mitigate the scandal of disunion. It is already in vogue in limited circles of Churches whose outlook is mutually congenial. But, taking the line of least resistance, it shirks the real difficulties. It releases each Church from any obligation to think out its position, and it shelves completely the difficult question of what contribution of faith or devotion or order each Church can bring to the future reunited Church. It takes each Church by itself, re-establishes its *status quo*, with possibly some sentimental addition, such as interchange of pulpits, which merely spreads a pleasant covering over the inherent difficulties of the situation. This ideal is not family life, but a loose federation, where each Church stands on its own basis, lives its own life, directs its own organisation, with no interference and with no very necessary interest in the affairs of the others.

Two more fatal objections must be mentioned. Not the least of them is that the New Testament knows nothing of any such scheme, nor would it have been conceivable to the mind of a man like St. Paul. The modern plan of Christian communities standing distinct and apart from one another, and in many cases existing to emphasise assent to some particular article of the Creed, or dissent from any creed at all, or to emphasise some particular form of polity—I say that this modern form of confessional Church can claim no sanction, whether from the New

Testament or the practice of the early Church. There were, indeed, local Churches—many of them founded by St. Paul himself—but the only thing that separated them was distance, not faith or order; and what is more important, each local Church was regarded as representing the whole body, not some particular section of it. Each Church, therefore, stood for the one truth and the whole truth. Each was linked to the others by the one universally recognised ministry, first of Apostles and prophets, later of presbyters and Bishops. Christian communities in watertight compartments, if I may so speak, were undreamt of in those days, and the gravest objection to a scheme of federation is that it would perpetuate these divergences, whether they are good or bad. If a Church possesses gifts and capacities which are according to the mind of Christ, we want those gifts and capacities for the whole body, and this they could never be under a loose scheme of federation. They would continue, indeed, but mainly as the sole possession of the community concerned. On the other hand, in the case of those distinctions which are useless or out of date, due it may be to some historical cause which has long since disappeared, instead of being quietly submerged, as they would be if they were involved in the life of the whole body, they would be perpetuated indefinitely, to the detriment of the whole cause, and most of all to the community immediately concerned. I do not wish to belittle the connection between the Churches which a scheme of federation would secure. It would, indeed, be better than nothing. If the Church was a human association of men drawn together by a common devotion to Christ, no fault could be found. But if the Church is more than that; if it is the Body of Christ; if it is the corporate reflection of God; if it is the organ of the Divine Spirit, then manifestly its links must be something more vital than federation. You cannot federate the members of a body. They are separate, indeed, in one sense, and each has its own function; but the connection between them is not one of organisation, it is one of life. They are controlled by the one head, animated by the one blood which circulates through the whole, inbreathed by the one spirit of which they are the material framework. Federation may be suitable for trade unions or for States, but for the Body of Christ it is utterly inadequate.

The final and fatal objection to federation is that it would not solve our difficulties. It would in no sense meet the situation. It is certain that the great historic Churches would refuse union on such lines. And even assuming that the Free Churches were ready and willing, this would mean a division of Christendom into pan-Catholic and pan-Protestant. This would be disastrous,

for each of the two great systems of thought has much to give to the other, and a true Catholicism must include all that in Protestantism which is in accordance with the mind of Christ. Is there any other way ?

I believe there is, and one which avoids the drawbacks and combines the advantages of both. If the disadvantages of federation are to be avoided, we must have a vital unity, a real organ of thought and action. If we are to avoid the disadvantages of amalgamation, we must keep all that is according to the mind of Christ in every community, not scrapping such differences of gifts or experience, but pouring them into the full stream of the family life, and thereby enriching all the members. Is this possible ? I dare to believe it is. So do 250 Bishops of the communion to which we belong. Briefly, their vision was this: A Catholic Church which should be in deed and in truth one great family circle, holding the same fundamentals of the faith, administering the sacraments which were ordained by Christ, acknowledging one universally accredited ministry, and combining for one supreme adventure—the capture of the kingdoms of this world for the kingdom of our Lord. One family circle. Yet within the family circle thus secured groups of Christians, each with large liberty for its own emphasis on doctrine, its own methods of worship, its own polity, its own discipline; in these matters, in fact, the largest liberty which is consistent with the fundamentals of the whole fellowship. Such a plan, as it seems, would be markedly free from the rigidity of amalgamation and the looseness of federation. It would manifest the essential characteristics of human life. For here would be a society which, while it would curb the extravagance of the individual Church, would jealously guard its liberty and enhance its personality. At the same time the individual Church, mindful of the glory of membership in the Catholic society, and realising itself far more truly within its borders than it ever could in the isolation of complete independence, would find its highest ambition in bringing its best to the common weal. This, I believe, is the only kind of unity worth real sacrifice.

Let me underline two or three points. First, I remind you that this one family circle was not only the plan of the early Church, but remained so for ten centuries. It meant that the Christian family was bound together by a succession of Bishops, which no one ever thought of questioning, and which kept the whole circle, in spite of its variety of differences, compact. This nexus of the succession can be held up to ridicule by representing it as merely mechanical. We must rid our minds of all that savours of the mechanical or the magical if we would see its real

beauty. Remember that the Bishops were not appointed by one another. They were ideally, and in many cases actually, appointed by the whole body, but they received their fatherly commission from those who had been already commissioned as heads of the family. The succession, therefore, on its more intimate—that is, its more true—side meant a great family life and love thus orderly expressed in the human links binding the Christians of one age to the next. In no other way, as it seems, could the unity of fundamental faith have been preserved. In no other way could the society have maintained its order and discipline in so many countries and in such various circumstances. The question is, Is this worth preserving for the united Church? Does anyone really desire to contemplate a reunited Church—if such a thing were possible—completely severed from the past? Is this method of family unity a factor which in these days we can afford to dispense with? Is it not true that with all their many virtues the separated Churches have not infrequently developed a one-sidedness and even vagueness of faith, almost degenerating in some cases into mere sentimentalism, which the full life of the family circle would have corrected or prevented? To put the matter bluntly, we must have Catholicism. At its best it has been described by a great nonconformist in glowing words:

"Catholicism holds before our eyes the conception of a Christianity which is one for all mankind, and can hold all mankind in one—a body of Divine truth which, living, develops with the ages, absorbs all new discoveries, and teaches men the way of God ever more perfectly. A worship which, celebrated at a million shrines, may yet be one in idea, method, and end. A worship which unites all classes and all sorts of men by touching at once the intellect and the heart, the æsthetic sense and the will. It holds in its heart all the ideal of sanctity, a noble renunciation, a sacrifice of self in the service of humanity, a complete surrender of the individual will to God."[1]

At its worst it shows a narrowness, an obscurantism, a professionalism, an over-emphasis on the objective, which reunion with other types of outlook would go far to correct. We may be certain that a true Catholicism must endeavour to express all that is in the mind of God so far as humanity can understand it, and satisfy all the true aspirations of men. I say again that a true Catholicism is the world's greatest need, and that unless the Catholic Church can find means of including all that is true in the devotion and activity of the separated Churches of the last 300 years it will remain impoverished and inadequate for its world task.

[1] Dr. Horton, *The Church and Nonconformity*, p. 88.

And it is precisely this larger Catholicism which is contained in the vision. For in the mind of the Bishops the reunited Church is to include all groups whose life and activities are founded on the fundamentals of the faith. In the words of a speaker at the Anglo-Catholic Congress, "Catholic truth is not servility to a system. Within it we are conscious of the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Built on the great indispensable foundations to which I have alluded, the Catholic temple is to include many chapels and many groups, each with its own outlook, tradition, methods of worship and devotion. I should, for instance, fearlessly contemplate the inclusion of the great Methodist Church, with its doctrine and polity in large measure unchanged. I can picture to myself two or three great Methodist leaders becoming the first Bishops, and the whole movement going forward as John Wesley originally intended it should, as a society within the Church, to the infinite enrichment alike of the Church and of the society itself.

But, it will be objected, this means reordination. I say let it mean reordination, or any sacrifice, however great, for an end so immeasurably superb. No one is asked to contemplate this step in itself apart from the vision. We have always to ask, not, Is it tolerable ? but, Is it worth while for the end in view ? And, mark you, the proposal is not a rigid reordination which would involve the repudiation of past ministries, but a *conditional reordination all round* just in so far as the satisfaction of the Christian conscience demands it. That is to say, that any one group is asked to humble itself to this extent in deference to conscientious scruples in another group. Reordination is one thing, and may be put out of court at once. Conditional ordination is quite another thing, as an act of grace and a sign that the group concerned is prepared to leave no stone unturned to bring about the consummation we all desire. If union is to come, say, between our Church and the Greek Church, or later on with the Roman Church, and if the process will be facilitated by my being conditionally reordained in order to set at rest all doubts, not in my own mind, for there could be none, but in the minds of fellow-Christians in other communions than mine, then I am ready, not to submit—that word is hateful—but to do my part in any corporate sacrifice which may be called for. I will not ask the nonconformist brother to do anything which I am not prepared to do myself. Indeed, were he prepared for this similar act of grace—for it can be nothing less than that—I should demand to be commissioned by him, if only as an outward demonstration of my penitence for all that in our Church has

made union with him difficult in the past. In a perfect Church, with no schisms and no past, and where no one was to blame, such a plan might well be rejected. But the Church is imperfect, and our past full of misunderstanding and prejudices, to say nothing of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. In face of this world-wide need, the Son of God declined to stand upon His rights, insisted upon being baptised, which was wholly unnecessary; insisted upon death, whereas He was the only human being who ought never to have died. Only by way of sacrifice lies fellowship in a world like ours. If we are all now to stand upon our rights, we shall stand there for ever—by ourselves. In such a stand no principle is concerned, unless it be the principle that no one is ever to give up anything or make any sacrifice for the sake of the body. But there is more than this to be said for such a course. Larger responsibility demands a larger equipment. Priests or ministers willing for such a step, and approaching thereby a great and almost bewildering enlargement of their ministry, might well seek still further gifts of spiritual power for its exercise. Indeed, we may be sure that the Spirit, in thus drawing the Churches into one, would be ready with a fresh anointing for a work and witness so immeasurably enhanced. Just as each step in the Christian ministry, from deacon to priest, or priest to bishop, involves no repudiation of the past, but the seeking of new powers for larger responsibility, so it would be here. We can hardly imagine the access of spiritual power which would thus accrue, and of which such a recommissioning of God's agents would be a sign and sacrament. No man who makes a sacrifice can foresee the often amazing forces of life and love which will thereby be released. He only sees the dark valley through which he must pass. So it must be in some degree with the great Christian groups. The life which the Church needs is available, and may be had at a price. Can we drink of that cup and be baptised with that baptism? Only in such a setting as this can the question of "reordination" be considered. Any isolation of it from this vision glorious leads merely to misunderstanding and distrust.

It may seem a step down from these heights when I proceed to enquire what are the next steps which can wisely be taken along a road which leads to so great a destination. Here the Lambeth Conference regulations may seem at first sight cold and halting, but we must remember, in the first place, that they are not intended to be definite regulations such as any Province might promulgate, but to be indications of the mind of the whole body of Bishops with the whole field in view. They are not a

book of rules. They are rather signposts both of direction and of danger. In the second place, whatever may be said to the contrary, the most urgent next step is the spadework to be undertaken by those who have seen the vision, whether clergy or laity, among the rank and file of our communion. For the great majority of these have yet to lift their eyes to the prospect and grasp the situation. For the most part they have not even read the Lambeth Appeal, and even in the inner circle, to judge by resolutions sometimes passed by chapters and conferences, there are many from whom its import has been hid. We are, of course, familiar already with such demonstrations of fundamental unity as are seen in united services on occasions of national solemnity. I have always advocated these without hesitation. They are gatherings of citizens met together in the name of Christ, and they interfere in not the smallest degree with the doctrine or the discipline of each Church concerned. This applies to gatherings which have been held by the score to commemorate the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in the war, or to dedicate memorials to their memory. But there are more definite things which can be done. I desire to bring to your notice the resolution passed at the last meeting of the Upper House of Canterbury Convocation, in which the following resolution of the Lambeth Conference was adopted and endorsed. While the conference could not approve of general schemes of intercommunion or exchange of pulpits, yet,

> "In view of prospects and projects of reunion a Bishop is justified in giving occasional authorisation to ministers not episcopally ordained, who in his judgment are working towards an ideal of reunion such as is described in our Appeal, to preach in churches within his diocese, and to clergy of the diocese to preach in the churches of such ministers."

Such action as is suggested here would not interfere with the ordinary ministrations to the faithful, at which they have every right to hear the commissioned messengers of their own Church. No such services are here in question, but rather gatherings which I can imagine assembling for the express purpose of considering these matters, and at which it would be immensely valuable and instructive to hear the views of those who have not been brought up within our communion. In like manner I can imagine members of our Church going as heralds to Nonconformist churches on similar occasions, in order to unfold the vision as far as they see it. Even in this direction, however, there is no need for hurry. It is still true of our own Church and of other Churches that the people have not really had time either to think out the meaning of the Lambeth Appeal or their own position in regard to it. It is true that the Free Churches

have been making pronouncements, but these are not intended, as I gather, to be final replies, but rather statements which are the result of a first reading and first impression. I repeat that to bring home to the laity in any Church what the vision must mean and the possibilities it contains is a task sufficient to engage most of our energies for some time to come. And so far as the clergy are concerned, a series of round-table talks will be worth a whole volume of pronouncements made by each Church to its own members.

I hope that in the near future formal conferences between our home Churches will be instituted. But apart from these the least we can do is to promote everywhere informal opportunities where, it may be, a few ministers of various Churches can meet together, get to know one another, and formulate their own ideas in regard to the great subject. Even at this time of day there is an ignorance of one another, both as regards the ministers and laity of the different Churches, which is as deep as it is sad. It is usual in some social circles for marriage to be preceded by a period of " walking out." I doubt whether the Churches have even reached the walking out period as yet, but it is high time they made this move, and at least more energetically cultivated one another's acquaintance. There need be no delay in this, for there are ways in which at this moment the Churches can act together as if they were already reunited. I hope that there may be formed in the various towns, and even in country districts of the diocese, as there have been elsewhere, Councils of Christian Service, whose business would be to survey the community life of the district from the point of view of Christian principle, to lay plans for resisting and attacking public wrong, and upholding justice and purity and temperance in all wise and legitimate ways.[1]

The formation of our new Church Councils will obviously facilitate this, for nothing would be simpler than the formation of united councils consisting of members elected from our own councils deputed to act with a similar number of members of other Churches. It is significant and very regrettable that in a country professedly Christian, and where so many Christians are to be found in each district, so little has been done to formulate Christian public opinion, still less to bring it to bear upon those who are responsible for the public welfare, whether in city or in village.

[1] Such councils have already been formed in many places, and are linked to a central committee in London, with which Bishop Gore and others are intimately connected, and whose officials would gladly give advice in the matter.

But the supreme necessity, as I have said, is the manifestation of God and the redemption of the world. For in a world like ours God can only manifest Himself in the framework of the material. When heaven came to earth it chose for its framework such dull, prosaic things as a manger in a crowded inn yard, a cottage home at Nazareth, a carpenter's bench, a company of dull-witted men whose ideas were chained to the things of the world, and, finally, an executioner's gibbet on a green hill far away. Nothing could be more unemotional or unromantic, yet it was the framework of the life of God. This is precisely what the Church should be. And it is to the task of reconstructing this framework that every Christian community is called at the present time. Moreover, as always, God makes the first move. Unity comes from Him. When God wanted expression, in Christ He found it. If God wants expression through His Church He will find it. If *we* are prepared, as He was, with *our* self-humiliation, our readiness as Churches to take the form of a slave, to go all lengths of sacrifice and love, then God will very highly exalt us into a body in which He can move forward to victory; will give us a name, a character, which will reflect His name; will transform us into a society aflame with His beauty, instinct with His Spirit.

We are called to a high adventure. We cannot escape facing our responsibility. To us of the Church of England has been given a peculiar opportunity, which I venture to believe was palpably evident at the Lambeth Conference, for acting as mediator and drawing a possible plan for that united Catholic Church which is according to the will of God.

Nor is this all. Even reunion is no end in itself. It is the reconstruction of a body in which the Spirit of Christ may have free course. And the Spirit is pressing for a more adequate utterance. The alternative to world chaos is a world State in which each nation bears its part. But, as has been truly said, "So far the movement towards a world State has lacked any driving power of passion." Here is the Church's opportunity. But only a reunited Church can inspire men and nations to a reunited world. If there is, indeed, to be world fellowship, the Church must supply the motive and show the way.

## V

## THE VILLAGE

In no sphere of life ought it to be possible more worthily to interpret the character of God in things social and religious than in the life of an English village. Yet in that sphere it is only very partially expressed and has sometimes almost been eclipsed. For the English village ought to be the finest type and specimen of community life. In a village, say, of a thousand people or less, the society is not too large to be unwieldy, yet large enough for all the features of community life to find full play. Village life, of course, has had its ups and downs. In early days, for the three centuries after the Norman Conquest, it was on the whole satisfactory and often beautiful. Before the Black Death people were better fed and clothed in our villages than any of their neighbours on the Continent. They were none the less the prey of two grim enemies, one or other of which was never very far off—namely, famine and pestilence. Pestilence in the fourteenth century reduced the population of England by one-third, but its immediate result was the improvement of conditions of life in the village. Labourers were scarce, and could in large measure command their own terms. The villager began for the first time to feel that he was a person of importance in the community. The spirit of independence began to spread. This was both inculcated and deepened by the exhortations of the wandering friars and other itinerant spokesmen, who held forth at the village cross or on the village green. To suppose that industrial unrest is a phenomenon peculiar to the present day is a grotesque mistake when one surveys the life of both town and village in mediæval times. Discontent and revolt against landlords and masters was preached as vehemently then in many a village as it is in the *Daily Herald* now. Here is an old fourteenth-century document describing an agitator of the time:

"He will shewe you that you be made of the same moulde and metall that the gentles be made of. . . . Whie should they have this great honour, royall castells and mannors with soe much landes and possessions

and you but poore tenements and cotages. He will shewe you also whie that Christ bought you as derely as them . . . and that your soules be as precious to God as theires."[1]

The climax was reached in the Peasants' Revolt, in which, among other leaders and instigators, was the famous John Ball, a priest of our own Church. The reforms which resulted from this eruption of discontent introduced a state of affairs which has been described as the golden age of village life. There was a large amount of freedom for the bread-winners. The festivals of the Church supplied not only solemn occasions of worship, but much gaiety and frolic. Church ales and folk music and morris dances, the interest and excitement when a band of pilgrims arrived at the village on their way to some famous shrine, the village fairs, the market in the neighbouring town—all these things ensured that, whatever was dull in England in those days, it was not village life. It was a life of compact communities, and it centred in and around the parish church. Thus things went on for many years, until the damp cloak of Puritanism put out the fires of festivity and fun, and community life disappeared into a tunnel, only to emerge in a more extravagant form at the Restoration. But the life of the villager had its drawbacks. Encroachments soon began upon his liberty, and even his property. The rise and rapid spread of the wool industry in England caused the more powerful farmers and landowners to turn arable land into pasture, and many a poor household was deprived of its rights of tillage in order to make more room for the rich man's sheep. It was this scandal that moved the great Sir Thomas More to strong words. "Your sheep," he says, writing in the early days of Henry VIII., "are no longer meek and gentle, but have become so great devourers that they swallow up men." This wool trade, of which the Lord Chancellor's woolsack is still the emblem, gave an impetus to that system of enclosures which has been in large measure the tragedy of village life from that day to this. It has been said that, taking the whole of these enclosure transactions up to the present time, no country has witnessed a more wholesale appropriation of public property to private uses. This encroachment did not go on without protest or without notice from the authorities. Indeed, the statute book from 1491 to 1601 contains many measures aimed at the protection of the labourer and the regulation of the process which deprived him of so much that was his due. It has been maintained that Cromwell's influence in the eastern counties was due to his championship of the commoners

[1] Quoted in *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation*, G. H. Coulton, p. 354.

in the fens. Yet the enclosures of those days were nothing to what they were in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth. Early in the eighteenth century the labourer, on the whole, had his rights. The common field system of tillage was practically undisturbed. The old village was under the shadow of the squire and the parson, but whatever the pressure outside and whatever the bickerings within, it remains true that the common field system formed a world in which the villagers lived their own lives and cultivated the soil on a basis of independence.[1] It must be confessed that the Church's part in this system of filching the common lands was not one which we can remember with any satisfaction. Often enough the big landowner and the Church in the person of the parson combined together to enclose common lands, or rather to promote a petition to Parliament, which was often granted in defiance of the wishes of the parishioners. It is, of course, fair to say that cultivation under the common field system was unorganised, and probably badly managed, and that the enclosure system was a great step forward in the competitive management of agriculture. The fact none the less remains that this improvement ought to have been effected without the calm appropriation by the big people of land which was not theirs to take. It is significant that one of our Northamptonshire poets, John Clare, was the victim of this system, and has left lines of lamentation at the destruction of the life of his own village which was caused thereby. Yet, as so often in our English history, what was wholly indefensible on paper was not always so bad in practice. The result of the system at its worst was the desolation of village life, and the transformation of free labourers into a status not far removed from serfdom. But even so, life in many a village was not intolerable, and we are familiar with scores of instances where village life, though, if you like, an autocracy, has been a benevolent autocracy; where the squire or the landowners have been the true friends of the people, and have by personal interest and kindliness done much to make good the faults of the system for which personally they were not responsible.

I have briefly indicated some of the upheavals in village life which have taken place in the last ten centuries. We are faced with a no less significant upheaval at the present time. The historian of the future will probably record these years after the war as bringing sweeping changes in village life comparable to the effects of the Black Death or the enclosure system. For one thing, there has been an immense transfer of ownership of

[1] Hammond, *The Village Labourer*, p. 34.

rural land[1]. The effect of this in all its aspects is not yet apparent, but there are some features which we can only contemplate with alarm—the purchase, for instance, of farms by syndicates, whose sole interest in the property is financial, and who put in a manager whose supreme interest is the balance sheet of the company rather than the life of the community. No one can have witnessed unmoved the silent procession of the old landowners as they have left the ancestral fields, and often the ancestral mansion. It has meant the departure of those who in many cases were the best friends of the people, and really shared the community life. In their place have too often come men who regard the property more as a pleasant diversion from town life than as a solemn responsibility. The good side of the process has been the increase in the number of tenant owners.[2] With all this has gone the awakening of the mind of the labourer, of which the end is not yet. In many cases he has but lately returned from France or more distant parts of the world. He has seen and heard things which, but for the war, would never have entered his head. He has mixed with people who, in the ordinary course, would never have loomed on his horizon. Often he is in a state of mental ferment and detachment from the old tradition, and yet not anchored to any new philosophy of life. That this new thoughtfulness means in some cases a new attitude of criticism to existing institutions, such as the Church, is by no means to be regretted. Behind it there is a longing for more reality both in politics and religion. It is not surprising, in view of this, that many of my fellow-workers report a falling off on the part of many of these men from their interest in the Church, though there are cases where the tide seems to be turning. On the other hand, there is a very material and selfish side to this unrest. "The men are unwilling to entertain anything that demands serious thought, and increased wages have sometimes led to a greed of gain which it appears impossible for them to resist." The war, in fact, has snapped old links, and new ones are not yet formed. The net result of all this is to make it clear that the task which confronts us in regard to our villages is the re-creation of community life. In this task the help of the Church—indeed, the inspiration of the Church—is quite indispensable. If we are wise we can give to our village folk incalculable help in the re-formation of their village life. But we

[1] During the year 1918-19, £20,000,000 was spent on the purchase of rural land in England.

[2] It has been stated that 50 per cent. of the lands which have been sold have been purchased by the tenants themselves. But even this arrangement, as many of them are finding out, has its drawbacks.

must be careful how we do it. The Church has not been conspicuous in the past for efforts to improve the standard of life of the villagers, and is regarded at present with a good deal of suspicion. If, however, we are prepared for new ways of going to work, if we realise that all attitudes of superiority and patronage must be scrapped for ever, and are prepared to do our part as comrades in a new comradeship, there is no limit to the usefulness of which the Church is capable.

The community has to be re-created. How can the Church help ? First, I would say, begin with the school. There is the community in miniature. There the young villagers receive their first impressions of community life. Wonders can be done in the village day-school by methods suited to the scholars. There have been cases where dull routine has been transformed into a live process of education under the leadership of teachers who love children and are alert to the needs of the community. It is of the utmost importance to enlist the interest of the parents —*e.g.*, to secure their representation on the management—and periodic festivals can be organised in which the educational interest of the village can be focussed and increased. But the foundation of this sense of community life is laid in the Fatherhood of God and the sense of the mighty fellowship which Christ founded. The opportunity of the parish priest in the school, when energetically and tactfully used, is unlimited. Apart from his share in prayers or in regular teaching, he can promote the idea that all village fellowship which is to be real and effective is rooted in the character of God.

With the school as the fountain head there are various ways of promoting the fellowship of the village, in all of which the Church of necessity has a deep interest. The most favoured vehicle of fellowship in many cases is the public-house. It is certain that this cannot be abolished, but it can be reformed. The incentive to the sale of alcoholic drinks as its main business can be removed. Its wares could be extended to include things both harmless and nourishing. Less satisfactory as a means of fellowship is the village club. Here, all depends on the management, and if many of our people have not very high ideals as to the spending of their leisure, that is mainly due to the fact that they have never been taught how to use it. Among more modern ways of cultivating village fellowship are human interests, which have already begun to draw people together in new ways. Village Institutes are already doing invaluable work in this way. We are gradually beginning to feel our way back to village music and village drama. Choir competitions and glee clubs and teaching of folk music in the village school are all

helping to this end. The Village Drama Society[1] has been founded with a view to the formation of village dramatic societies. To many minds this kind of recreation may seem to be beyond the capacity of the village, but in practice it often proves to be not only feasible, but educative and delightful.

The passion for dancing which has raged furiously during these last years can be turned into less vulgar and more useful channels by the cultivation of the ancient folk dances. Here, again, the help of the trained teacher will be needed. In all these methods of recreation the help and guidance of the Church is invaluable. We cannot escape the responsibility of leadership in these matters any more than in matters directly religious. But we must lead; we must make it plain that recreation is one thing and waste of time is another. Such things as whist drives and dances, while entirely legitimate in moderation for recreation's sake, are most inappropriate as mere methods of raising money for Church expenses and similar objects. For the leaders of the Church to bribe by means of an evening's whist the members of Christ's family, whether in town or village, to do what ought to be their plainest duty and privilege in regard to the upkeep of the Church and its services, is surely monstrous. Does the housewife need to be bribed to keep her house in order ? While entertainments for the purpose of raising money are quite justifiable in certain circumstances, it is time, I think, for the Church to set her face against these methods where it is the plain and paramount duty of her members to provide the necessary resources as part of their offering to God.

This brings me by a not unnatural transition to speak of the contribution of the well-to-do to village life, and here I am far from thinking merely of their financial contribution. I am thinking of their sense of responsibility towards the community of which they are members. In the main the old landowning class recognised this responsibility, and met it in ways which have become a splendid tradition in many villages. They were, and are, in countless instances, the true friends of the people. It remains to be seen whether the members of the new landowning class to which I have referred are prepared to follow in their footsteps, and whether they will resist the temptation to regard the country house as affording little more than a pleasant opportunity for rest and change, and for the entertainment of their friends. To act upon this fellowship-responsibility is to make an invaluable contribution to village life. To neglect it is to help to destroy that fellowship which for the sake of the future life of this country it is so vital to build up.

[1] Hon. Sec., Miss M. E. Kelly, Lefton, South Devon.

It need hardly be said that this responsibility is in the closest connection with property. The well-to-do in a village are often in a position to control much of its housing. In the houses which the big house owns or controls there is given an exhibition which all may see of this sense of responsibility or its absence. "Some of the worst houses here," says one of the clergy, "are owned by church-people"; and he adds, "The well-to-do have lived a life of 'eat, drink, and be merry.' The working man is saying, 'It is our time now.'" These remarks apply both to the country and to the town. "The housing of the village," says another of my correspondents, "is a standing trouble, and sets class against class." Another country clergyman gives an account of his parish from this point of view, which is far from unique. Out of 143 houses in his parish, 79 are small and mean, possessing only one room downstairs, having no back room or scullery, with at most two small bedrooms upstairs. These small and mean cottages are mostly built in yards, having no back yard, no back door, and no outdoor privacy of any sort. This means, of course, one living-room for the whole family, and it is not difficult to infer from this that the men and youths of the village have little to induce them to remain indoors. They cannot sit down to a book or a quiet game, and therefore wander about the streets or seek shelter in the public-house. Such overcrowding, of course, tends to destroy all sense of decency, to say nothing of morality. It is the standing miracle of the villages that the life of the people is on the whole so clean, in spite of such inducements to the contrary. Again and again in the reports from every part of the diocese this evil is emphasised. "The housing here is abominable," says another clergyman in a village which to the outward eye is as picturesque and attractive as one could wish to see. In some cases the landlords, owing to the crushing taxation, are literally unable to do what otherwise they would do with eagerness and alacrity. On the other hand, there are landlords who seem to have no perception of the implications of their religion in this respect. I have in mind more than one village where the squire has finely restored the church, but has been strangely oblivious to the crying needs of its members or the cottages they live in. What is the sense of renewing the village temple for the encouragement of religion and morality while conniving at conditions which make these things wellnigh impossible?

Sometimes, indeed, the well-to-do are strangely ignorant of the actual conditions of the life of the people, whether in town or village. "Some are harsh, selfish, and arrogant; others are kind, just, and generous." So says the rector of

a country parish, but he significantly adds, "Both are quite blind to the true lives of the poor." The double testimony is re-echoed far and wide by my correspondents. One speaks of the example of the well-to-do as all for good. Another says it does untold harm. This latter verdict is often connected with the observance of Sunday. "A hateful example of carelessness," is the phrase used by one clergyman of experience and judgment in regard to the new-comers at the manor. He describes the services of the Church as carried on to the accompaniment of shouts of "Thirty all," "Deuce," and so on, from the lawn of the big house which adjoins the churchyard, with the inevitable result that when he visits the cottages he is met with the bluff intimation: "You go and talk to the Manor House, sir." Another man of experience, who speaks first of the good influence of the faithful well-to-do, goes on to say that in many other cases the example set is far worse now than it was before the war, so far as the whole neighbourhood is concerned. "The hunting people," he says, "in this neighbourhood have been richer and more extravagant than ever, have subscribed to no local charities or clubs, and never attend service. These are the people who hire houses for the hunting season. The labourers, and even the farmers, are bitter in their criticisms, and, indeed, much class animosity has been aroused. The people at large are beginning to hate these idlers." Testimony of this kind is sadly frequent from more than one hunting district in the diocese. Such behaviour means not merely the negation of religion, nor even the destruction of village life, but a liberal contribution to that mental soil in which the seeds of revolution most quickly germinate. The fact is that in these days we know so much about one another's lives that personal example, especially on the part of those who through their financial resources can order their lives much as they like, reaches farther and produces an effect incalculably greater than the persons in question would ever suspect. Yet all the time the other side of the picture remains, and there are many men and women who still regard hunting, not as the business of life, but as a recreation, and who have done and do their part in the community life of the district in which they live. Defects are often more owing to want of thought than want of heart, and I would venture to appeal to all the hunting people of the diocese, so many of whom are members of the Church, to think more about the influence which they exercise, and to range themselves by the side of those who are seeking to spread that fellowship which can find its only adequate foundation in the family of God. Many of these remarks have to do with what have been called

the "war rich." It is notable that testimony reaches me to the effect that the example of the formerly well-to-do—the old aristocracy—is more powerful than ever it was. "They are showing how diminution of means can be endured with an accession rather than with a decrease of dignity and influence."

To sum up, there comes from town and country the same cry of need. The craze for material things focussed in the breathless hunt for pleasure is at present lying like a miasma on the souls of the people. The old moral standards are ignored. The pagan philosophy which inspired the war and in large measure the industrial organisation of the nineteenth century is as alive as ever, only it now finds more peaceful outlets. The supremacy of the great Ego—my will, my pleasure—is paralysing the higher sensibilities and the spiritual instincts of thousands. It is not unnatural that it should be so. A war such as we have gone through, even after all allowance has been made for its heroisms, dulls and deadens all life, whether national or personal, to these higher reaches of the spiritual. It knocks people half-unconscious. Men's souls have been stunned, and only now do we see even the beginnings of recovery. This lends appalling emphasis to the responsibility of the Church for the awakening of men's souls, and of this I must now speak.

In most villages this means the parson. I use that word deliberately, for it exactly describes what the parish priest ought to be, the person, the exhibition of what personality can be in life and influence. It is true that in the more advanced minds among the labourers he belongs to a system which is passing away, and is identified with a régime which has not always been ready to forward the efforts of the villagers towards a fuller and more reasonable life.[1] None the less, I believe that in the majority of cases, certainly in this diocese, the village clergy hold the key of the situation. In the new attempts to build a real community life the representative of the supreme community can be, if he will, invaluable as a guide, philosopher, and friend. For he stands, or ought to stand, for all that higher side of life which, as we have just seen, has been so weakened by the war, but without which no real fellowship is possible. It has often been complained that the Church of England depends so much on the personality of her clergy. Rightly or wrongly, this is undoubtedly true, and most of all it is true of the villages. The task of the country parson in these last years has been colossal from almost every point of view, and no small part of the heroism which came to light in the war was found, and is found, in the

[1] See experience of the Rev. F. A. Iremonger in connection with Agricultural Labourers' Union, Leicester Church Congress Report, p. 216.

country rectories and vicarages of our land. I am proud to be associated with so many fellow-workers in the country districts of the diocese whose steadfast persistence in well-doing and in wise leading of the people is beyond all praise. Yet apart from the few black sheep who are a standing hindrance to the Kingdom of God, it is undeniable that the efficiency of the parish priest is gravely threatened from more sides than one. To begin with, in most cases he has received no special training whatever in rural affairs. He often goes into a village after a prolonged spell of work in the town, and from that very fact lacks the energy with which otherwise he would set himself to learn new ways and face new problems. From the financial point of view his position is becoming in scores of cases wellnigh impossible.[1]

The housing of the country clergy exhibits, as a rule, the exact opposite evil to that of their parishioners. The houses are often too big and too rambling, and the grounds are often the same, with the result that the sum which has to be spent on repairs, and more particularly dilapidations, is preposterously large in proportion to the income. I am glad to know that there is now an association in the diocese which is the beginning, at least, of a scheme which, with proper financial support, will, I hope, materially lighten the burden as time goes on.[2] This is a matter which, in my judgment, ought to be dealt with on a national scale, and will, I hope, figure prominently in the report, for which the whole Church will look with eager interest, of the commission which has been appointed to investigate the question of our finances. The strain has been felt and the burden has been borne not only by the parsons, but by those whose record of service to the Church, and therefore to the community, is superb for its un-

[1] Though there have been too many benefices in this diocese with incomes of less than £200 a year, since this charge was delivered the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have completed their scheme for small benefices, so that as from May 1, 1921, unless for some very urgent reason, all are brought up to £200 a year, even if in private patronage. Since 1917 13,720 acres of glebe in the diocese have been sold, and the incomes of 132 benefices have been increased in consequence.

[2] There are great advantages in joining this scheme for incumbents of livings not over £200 in value. These are (1) half the cost of putting into repair, including the fees; (2) half the future cost of maintaining in repair, and the fees incidental to this; (3) an assurance that only the estimated sum shall be required even if the repairs eventually cost more. For benefices of higher value the help definitely offered is not so considerable. It consists mainly in the payment of the fees, but further help of various kinds is given, particularly in laying the matter before Church Councils, churchwardens, or patrons, and obtaining financial help. Moreover, the association hopes to be in a position to advance some portion of the cost, at all events in the case of livings of less value, before the expiration of the first period of five years.

obtrusive efficiency—I mean the wives and daughters of the clergy. What they have done and do, not merely in face of those difficulties, but in seconding and often inspiring the efforts of the parish priest for the spiritual good of the people, cannot be adequately expressed. In this diocese, at least, they are comrades in the work of which any Bishop might well be proud.

Apart from the more material side of his difficulties, the country parson is deprived of the inspiration of numbers which is so familiar to his brother in the town. He has to deal with men one by one. Each character has to be considered, each soul guided, often literally from the cradle to the grave. The tiresome people, the cantankerous parishioners, who in the big town parish are lost in the crowd, are in the village terribly conspicuous, and one family, or even one person, who is determined to thwart the work of the Church can exercise a power for mischief almost inconceivable to the man who is only accustomed to big populations. The country clergyman, in fact, has to be a master of the art of infinite patience. Like the processes of nature with which his parishioners are mainly concerned, he must be content to go slow, to sow seeds whose harvest he may never see. Add to this his isolation both physically, socially, and intellectually, and the wonder is not that so many country parsons break down and give up, but that so many persevere undaunted in their work. The demand on their capacity is likely to be far greater in the future than it has been, for if the village fellowship is to be created by the Church fellowship, the Church fellowship has in many cases to be created first. The sense of being God's people, with a definite responsibility for God's cause, owning obedience to God's laws and loyalty to God's name—this is so often conspicuous by its absence. This lack of the sense of corporate responsibility as members of Christ is at the bottom of the poor attendance at services, the spasmodic attendance at the Holy Communion, the almost total failure to appreciate what the Church really stands for. When the village fellowship is really created it will find in the Church, and particularly in the Holy Communion, its highest expression. At present these things are too often in the air, unrelated to any sense of community life, regarded as extra duties to be undertaken only by the spiritually élite. Already in several instances, under wise leadership, the Holy Communion is becoming the fellowship centre, celebrated, for instance, at 9.30, and occasionally followed by a communal meal. Our people as yet have little notion that life is sacramental. The material and the spiritual are often wholly detached the one from the other. A great task lies upon the Church to show the true relation

between them, and to link up the sacraments with the people's common life. Here is an adventure needing patience indeed, but with glorious possibilities. The parish priest has too often begun at the wrong end; has dumped down, so to speak, the great expression of fellowship found in the sung Eucharist on people who have not yet begun to understand what fellowship means. It is useless to force on a village congregation signs and symbols before they have begun to appreciate the great realities which they represent. This proceeding, instead of helping the fellowship, destroys it. It obscures the character of God and confirms the people in the idea that, after all, religion is beyond the understanding of the ordinary man, and is in a department to itself, detached from the everyday interests of village life with which they are concerned. Yet this true philosophy of life—the spiritual as the foundation of the material—can gradually be brought to people's minds in ways very simple. A church always open for prayer; the parson seen and known to enter therein for prayer day by day, whether others do or not; the bell rung, it may be, at noon and at eventide, after the manner of the angelus, can be made a signal for all within sound to lift up their hearts for a moment to God. Much can be made of festivals and anniversaries; the fact can be impressed that intercession at seed-time is at least as important as thanksgiving at harvest. And through it all the life of the rectory or vicarage can be, and often is, a standing exhibition of what Christianity in practice must mean.

I believe that in these days of spiritual torpor—and this applies to town as well as country—we shall be wise to use all reasonable ways of appealing to the eye as well as to the ear of the people. Simple Nativity plays at Christmas, solemn processions in Lent or Holy Week, Rogation processions, the holding of at least one service of harvest thanksgiving in the open air, the artistic use of more colour in the church itself—all these things will help to make new avenues of access into the minds of the people. It is true that though in the country villages there is a time, as the writer of Ecclesiastes would have said, for patience and respect of conventions, there is also a time for new and even startling methods. We need more than ever ways which will bring the challenge of the Faith home to those who have never brought themselves to make any real decision on the deepest issues of life, never allowed themselves to face the meaning of that bearing of the cross which our Lord everywhere emphasises as the condition of discipleship. For with all her encouragement of community life in the several ways which I have mentioned in this Charge, the Church must ever remember that she stands for that

aspect of things which looks towards eternity, for a community life which is nothing if not a preparation for the community life of heaven, and for a development of the individual which has no connection with mere self-assertion, whether in business or in pleasure, but every connection with that self-denial to which, by our membership in the beloved community, we are all called. We stand, in fact, in village as in town, for a way of life which is not popular, which is a standing contradiction of the economic assumptions on which much of our life is based, and which can only be produced according as men are renewed in the spirit of their mind by that spirit of truth and fellowship and power which is at once the hope of the Church, the inspiration of her priests, and the life of her members.

## VI

## POLITICS

Not in politics is it common to look for any interpretation of the character of God. The two subjects, in most men's minds, are severely separate. Indeed, so far as the Church is concerned, our first inclination is to say that the less it has to do with politics the better. If by this is meant the Church identifying itself with a political party, as such, no one will be found to dispute it. But this dictum is often proclaimed by some whose real dread is lest the Church should seem to give any countenance to the political party with which they disagree. As a fact, the identification of the Church with a political party is by no means obsolete. Those who suspect that the Church may be in danger of coquetting with Labour often conveniently forget that for whole decades of history Churchman and Conservative were almost interchangeable terms. There is, indeed, a suggestion of this even as late as the last General Election. In what is still in some degree the official Church organ in the Press, these words were used shortly before that event, though they were carefully guarded and qualified:

"If Conservatives are ready to identify themselves, as of old, with the interests of the Church, and if they will be true to their traditional watchword of Church and King, it would be natural for churchmen to work with them, since in politics it is necessary before all things to be practical."[1]

Nor is it safe to say that the Church must never lend her support or organise opposition to political programmes as such. We still remember the meetings and processions and demonstrations when the disestablishment of the Church in Wales occupied a prominent place on the party programme. In like manner questions of temperance reform and of divorce may and do involve a grave responsibility on the part of the Church to any given political programme. The Church's business is to judge programmes and measures, not by the party they proceed from, but by her own standards. Her sole concern is with their moral effect on the life of the people. The one touchstone to which she has any right to subject them is whether they will or will not advance the Kingdom of God.

[1] *The Guardian*, August 18, 1918.

But the difficulty is not mainly in this direction. There is no serious danger of church-people mixing religion with politics in any undue measure. The danger is rather in the opposite direction. Large numbers of church-people have not yet perceived that there is any connection between religion and politics, using that term, of course, not in its party sense, but in its large sense—the management of public affairs, national and local, or industrial, for the common good. In my Visitation enquiries I put a question on this point, "Do the people connect their religion with matters political—*e.g.*, international and economic—and, if so, in what way?" The verdict is very varied, but it proves, at least, that there is a widespread apathy and want of thought in the whole matter. That the parishioners see but little connection between the faith which they hold and public life, whether national or local, is in some cases regarded as a matter for satisfaction. "Happily, no," is the answer in one case. Sometimes the view is precisely the opposite: "Unfortunately not." Several of my correspondents bear witness to the fact that in the minds of their people religion and public affairs are kept in watertight compartments. None the less, the connection between the Church and politics in this large sense is close and intimate, and one which no follower of Christ can escape. For if we believe in the Incarnation, we believe that no human interest can ever be remote from God; that we are not a collection of human units, but members of a society; and that for the society as well as for the individual there is an ascertainable will of God, which together we can accept or refuse. Further, it is becoming more and more evident that half the ills that flesh is heir to can either be promoted or prevented by social action. In other words, the extension of Christ's kingdom is not only a matter of individual conversion, unspeakably important as that is, but can be affected by action taken by the community, whether the community expresses itself nationally in Parliament or locally in Urban or Rural Councils, or through other organisations of public activity. We may go further and say that only through such community action can the will of Christ be brought to bear upon such great ranges of human interest as international relationships, industrial organisation, or social habits. It is, for example, a mighty thing to reclaim an individual drunkard; but it is in some respects a greater thing to bring about such measures as shall remove the temptation from hundreds who otherwise might fall. In the case of this particular social evil we saw the beneficent process of prevention actually going on before our eyes during the war. And while I am speaking of this I should like to warn all people who care

for the welfare of the community to be on the alert lest all those wise measures of liquor control which were so effective during the war, and which interfered with the reasonable liberty of no one, be frittered away before the public have noticed what is happening. The process is, I regret to say, already far advanced.

Further, it is a Christ-like thing to prefer fellowship to war as a matter of individual opinion. It is a greater thing to create such a public opinion as shall make men realise that there is a higher patriotism than that of the nation, and that no nation can properly perform its functions until it relates itself to the whole human family of God. So, again, whereas it is a fine thing to help the worker to be patient and self-possessed amid bad conditions of labour, it is a greater thing to take such means to abolish the bad conditions for all, and in some degree, at least, to emancipate one's fellow-men in mill or factory from all that is merely degrading or even dangerous in their toil. There are, and always will be, those who, like Bernhardi, maintain that Christianity is merely a matter of private concern, and has no social message for the days in which we live. But the man who thinks this incurs the tremendous responsibility of answering the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" in the negative, for it is mainly through social action that this responsibility can be met. He is also guilty of the foolishness and even criminality of leaving at the disposal of the forces of evil those potent weapons of public action by which alone in these days the life of the community can be protected.

It comes to this: you cannot divide up life into compartments, and isolate individual from social or religious from secular. To the believer in God through Jesus Christ there is nothing common or unclean, nothing of merely private interest. Even the salvation of one's soul is a social affair, for upon it depends a whole network of relationships of unending possibility for good or evil. "In living," says that teacher to whom we naturally look on such a subject as this, Bishop Westcott, "the elements of life cannot be separated. The life of the man is one because personality is one. What a Christian does he must do as a Christian. He stands before others in his whole life as the representative of his faith. The life of the man is one, but it is not solitary. Man is not a whole, finally and self-complete. His unity leads up to a higher unity. He is constrained to seek completeness in fellowship with his fellow-men and with God. He cannot reach his own perfection except through social action."[1] The truth of this is brought home to us vividly in these days, when the

[1] *Christian Aspects of Life*, p. 223.

State more and more assumes a moral responsibility for its citizens. For in this twentieth century the State is so much more than a mere policeman. It can affect, and does affect, by its action most of the great moral problems, as, for example, problems of intemperance or impurity, problems which bear so closely on the family life of the nation. Already education, conditions of work, and even the organisation of recreation, are now affairs of the State. Whatever may have been the case, therefore, in days gone by, when the State was comparatively restricted in its scope of action, the responsibility of the Church for the formation and spread of Christian principles, and thereby of a Christian public opinion, cannot be exaggerated. I would apply this to the two main problems of community life which so urgently beset us at the present time—international affairs and industrial affairs.

No more perplexing problem has ever confronted statesmen than the making of a just and lasting peace in the world to-day. When you add to this the larger racial problem which is never far from the surface, when you realise how much turns on the part which is to be played in the future by such nations as China and Japan, you may well feel bewildered by the apparent impossibility of ever finding a solution. Yet, as we all know, inspired by a moral impetus, itself a reaction from the war, and under the personal inspiration of the late President of the United States of America, Europe has embarked on a great adventure. The League of Nations alone holds any promise of light in this international darkness.[1] That statesmen in our day should have conceived such a plan and carried it into action even so far as they have done at present is perhaps the one moral gain which the war has left us. But we are under no delusions as to the change of outlook which must be effected, and effected on a colossal scale, if the plan is to grip and to hold. For it is based on two splendid assumptions, both of which have been in practice totally denied in most national activities up till now. The first is that the world is in ideal, and ought to be in fact, one family. The second is that those nations which are more powerful are peculiarly responsible to help those which are less powerful. The scheme, in fact, unfolds a larger and higher patriotism, for it makes it plain that the national ambition whose end is national greatness must give way to the ambition whose end is the welfare of the whole international family. The scheme is magnificent, alluring, superb. These assumptions are revolutionary. They are, in fact, Christian. Compared with the practice of the nine-

[1] Since this charge was delivered the Conference at Washington has begun its deliberations, and promises great achievements.

teenth century, it is indeed a case of turning the world upside down, or, rather, as we ought more accurately to say, right side up, for it is its topsy-turvy condition hitherto which has produced the political explosions, from the last and greatest of which we are only beginning to recover.

It follows from this, that of all societies, the Church should be the mainstay of this scheme. It should enlist the support of all sane men, if only because it provides the one alternative to an ever-steepening slope of dark intrigue and unbridled ambition which must ultimately precipitate civilisation itself into the pit. The Church's part, however, is not based on this very practical consideration, but on the fact that the programme is essentially Christian, and because only the Christian Gospel can supply the needed spiritual momentum to carry it through. If any further emphasis is needed for the churchman who may still be wavering in the matter, I would commend the resolutions passed by the Lambeth Conference, a body which, I venture to remind you, officially represents the entire leadership of the communion to which we belong:

"We rejoice that in these times of peril God is giving to His Church a fresh vision of His purpose to establish a kingdom in which all the nations of the earth shall be united as one family in righteousness and peace. We hold that this can only come through the acceptance of the sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His teaching, and through the application of the principles of brotherhood, justice, and unselfishness, to individuals and nations alike.

"The Conference, heartily endorsing the views of its committee as to the essentially Christian basis of the League of Nations, is of opinion that steps should immediately be taken, whether by co-operation or concurrent action, whereby the whole Church of Christ may be enabled with one voice to urge the principles of the League of Nations upon the peoples of the world."[1]

These are only two resolutions out of eight which deal with the matter, but they are sufficient. I am not unmindful, indeed, of the way in which churchmen in this diocese, as elsewhere, have rallied in support of this great adventure.[2] After all, policies, whether good or bad, are based upon the bulk of opinion, which itself is formed by the personal thoughtfulness, influence, and example of ordinary men like ourselves. It is, in my judgment, as plain as the proverbial pikestaff that the society which is committed to the principles of Christ is thereby committed

[1] See Lambeth Conference Report, p. 25.

[2] I am proud to know that there were some months ago, and for all I know may be still, more members of the League of Nations Union in Leicester than in any other town in the kingdom except London. I only hope that other towns and villages will follow that good example.

up to the hilt to this international experiment, and that no Christian can escape his bounden duty either of supporting this project or of producing a plan which, in his judgment, will be more Christian still. For the follower of Jesus Christ the unforgivable attitude is that which denounces such a scheme as unpractical and visionary. It was our so-called practicalness which landed us in the immeasurable miseries and losses of the war. It is because we refuse to be visionary that we muddle on, and never take time or trouble to find any intelligent principle on which our public life can be based. But we Christians have a principle, and act upon it we must. God has shown us His character in Christ. We have to exhibit that character to the world. The way to do this is to organise our life, public and private, in accordance with the principles there unfolded. To fail to do this, as we know too well, spells disaster. To achieve it would mean a new way of life; most literally and gloriously, a way of peace.

This applies also in those industrial affairs on which perforce in these days so much of our attention is concentrated. I do not desire to go over well-worn ground. None the less it is true in these matters, as also in international affairs, that as yet comparatively few church-people connect Christian principles with common practice. As we look over the modern scene, the outstanding feature is, of course, the profound unrest in every country. I must confine my attention, however, to our own land, where, indeed, we have problems enough and to spare. The root of the matter is not wages, or even conditions of labour, so much as the longing for a truer self-expression than the present economic system promotes. We English people are not gifted with strong imaginations, and there are many church-people who, in their comfortable arm-chairs, find it impossible to picture the kind of situation in which thousands of workers have found themselves, or do find themselves, at the present time. To the more comfortable classes the certainty of food and lodging in ample measure is so much part of their very existence that they simply cannot conceive the state of affairs where the opposite is the case. Many a man with an assured income, which can only end with his life, if, indeed, it ends then, simply cannot imagine the feelings and outlook of the brother man whose income is liable to stop at any week's notice, and to whom a long period where no work is available is not merely a possibility, but in many cases an actuality. To deprive a man of his work, no matter how inevitable the cause may be, is to make a serious drain upon his self-respect. It is true, indeed, that there are people in our social life who submit to that deprivation

with surprising alacrity, and who have never done a day's work in their lives. Many of these make a business of pleasure, but in the case both of the well-to-do who need not work, and the ill-to-do who cannot work, the effect is the same—moral deterioration of character. St. Paul's terse dictum, taken from that wonderful manual of economic law, the Old Testament, "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat," has a reverse side, which might be expressed, "If a man wishes to eat, he must work." Our social life is, in fact, lived far too much in compartments, and even in these days classes are so separated that one class finds it extraordinarily difficult to picture to itself the outlook and experience of another. But no society can afford to have a class who are in the main hewers of wood and drawers of water for those who with superior education and superior financial resources control the conditions under which the work shall be done, and the implements by which it is accomplished. And when that working class is both the largest section of the community and is shut out from any effective part in organising the services by which the needs of that community are supplied, the difficulty becomes acute.[1]

This account of the situation is not a matter of controversy, it is a simple statement of facts. The depth of the unrest which is thereby produced can be measured by the element of revolutionary propaganda by which certain members of society hope to effect the radical alteration which they desire. Men are not naturally discontented; indeed, the patience of those, particularly in England, whose outlook and conditions of life can only be described as C 3 has been, and is, a marvel to all beholders. Revolution does not thrive where people are contented. Yet the unrest which in view of existing conditions should be in large measure described as natural and healthy is developing patches of inflammation which are symptoms of the seriousness of the disease. There are those, for instance, who would abolish democracy as we know it, and erect the tyranny of the proletariat on Russian lines. Even in contemplating a crisis when the Labour party may come into power, they regard that prospect as worthless "unless and until they have absolute economic and industrial control vested in their hands." They say plainly that Parliamentary democracy is a myth, exploded by the war and the developments arising from the war.[2]

To deal with this aggravation of the disease it is merely futile

[1] For a full treatment of this subject see R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society.*

[2] R. Williams, *The New Labour Outlook*, pp. 159, 160.

to denounce Bolshevism. Bolshevism is an enormity, but it only came into existence because of the enormity of the system which it superseded. The fact remains that the political power which every citizen possesses in our country does not necessarily carry with it that reasonable liberty by which each man orders his own life, and has that personal interest in his daily work which comes from a sense of doing service to the community. The true workman wants not merely to count as a citizen in the life of the nation—that he does already—but as a respected and responsible member of his craft. Instead of regarding his work as an inevitable drudgery which must be endured for the sake of his daily bread, he desires to find the main interest of his life in that work, and to share in some reasonable way the responsibilities of all who belong to the same craft, whether by hand or brain. As it is, most men live their best lives outside their work. It is their recreation or their hobby which brings them real joy. In the case of millions, that which they produce has not the slightest interest for them. This, again, is not a class question or a matter of controversy. It is a fact of national life with which we are confronted. As Christians we are bound to ask whether this is satisfactory, and, if not, how it can be altered for the better. For from the merely economic point of view we cannot go on as we are. It is hardly too much to say that the present economic system is breaking down on every hand, and no nation can afford to face the twentieth century with an industrial organisation which is moribund. The new wine of larger views and worthier purposes is beginning to burst forth. We must find new bottles to contain it. The country which can first find these new bottles, which can evolve an economic system which satisfies the legitimate aspirations of the workers, is likely to have the world at its feet, because the elimination of this element of dissatisfaction would produce a new generation of contented workers whose powers of production would be astonishing in comparison with the low level to which now we are accustomed. There is surely no sane man, be he employer or worker, who would not take drastic steps to put things right if only he could see the way. As churchmen, indeed, we do not and cannot pose as economic experts. But we belong to a society which is committed to certain moral principles manifested in the character of God, and therefore inherent in the consciences of men. It is our duty to ask how far these principles have been observed, and whether the non-observance of them is not a main cause of our trouble. For to flout moral principles is fatal to any human system, man being what he is, not the low creature of merely material interests which economists often represent him to be,

but made in the image of God, capable of exercising responsibility, and gifted with a creative power which by its very nature demands some exercise.

These principles, or some of them, are frequently enunciated and nominally accepted by those who profess allegiance to Christ, such, for example, as the sacredness of personality and the glory of co-operation in a common task. It is not difficult to see that both these have been in large measure flouted in the system which has been in vogue for some 150 years. Since the industrial revolution it has been axiomatic in the business world that man was made for industry, and not industry for man—a proposition usually summed up in the trite phrase, "Business is business." This means that we have looked on men merely as economic units of production, instead of as responsible beings of immortal worth. In the same way the second principle has been obviously flouted. In the average industrial activity there are two classes of people concerned—namely, those who are in control and those who are controlled—and though through Whitley Councils and similar methods there is a certain amount of co-operation between them, the co-operation is superficial and not fundamental. The "partners" in industry are not the whole brotherhood of those who engage in it, not those who contribute the muscle or even necessarily the brains, but those who contribute the capital.

It is not, however, on this aspect that I desire to dwell. I rather want to concentrate attention on one Christian principle, and to point out that, so long as it is ignored, we shall find no industrial peace. The principle is this: That in industry all men must have a worthy object in view, or it will fail to satisfy their aspirations and fail to command the best they can give. The true father and mother will put forth all the energy of which they are capable, and endure all the trials which come upon them with comparative equanimity, because the objective of their activities is the utterly worthy one of keeping the home and the bringing up of the children. Our gallant men in the war left no life unoffered, because to them, as to us, the object was wholly worthy—the protection of Britain's ideals and the inauguration of a larger liberty in Europe and the world. I note in passing that there is a kind of tragic irony in even mentioning this in view of what has happened since, but that is not my business just now. My point is that, men being what they are, a great activity must have a great purpose. What, broadly speaking, is the purpose of industrial activity as at present organised?

We may say that there are two objects in view: one is primary and the other is secondary. The primary object is the production

of wealth; the secondary object is the service of the community. Take the coal-mines as an obvious illustration. It will not be denied that from the owners' point of view the primary object of their activities is to produce wealth in the shape of profits, which they dispose of partly in dividends, partly in royalties, and partly in salaries and wages. A secondary object is to provide the public with a necessity of life, but not necessarily in the most efficient way, or we should be spared the whole army of distributors who handle the coal and take their toll between the pit's mouth and the public; nor at the most reasonable prices, as we know to our cost. Everyone, therefore, engaged in the industry, whether he be the salaried manager in the office or the miner picking in the seam, knows that the primary object of his labour is the production of wealth, and, in the second place, the service of the community. Contrast with this another great service equally vital to the national welfare, the Royal Navy. Here, again, you have the same two objects, but they are precisely reversed. The navy does not exist primarily to make money, though all its servants are paid, and thereby make their livelihood. It is primarily organised for the national welfare. Its servants are remunerated according to the service they render. The *personnel*, therefore, from the Admiral to the stokers, feel that their energies are put forth, not mainly for the production of wealth, but for the service of the community. And I submit that this motive is the greater of the two, and likely to produce better results. What would a sailor feel like if his ship were a joint stock company run as a financial venture by a capitalist, who hired men for his own personal service and gave them no larger wages than he was obliged to, whose object, in fact, was primarily the making of money, and only secondarily the defence of our shores? The day is coming when Englishmen will feel it is just as unreasonable to expect the best from the service of the mines or the railways under these conditions, which are the existing conditions, as he would from the Navy thus organised.

The fact is that no man or system which is self-centred can be free from unrest. Its purview is too narrow, its end too limited. That it does not work economically is obvious from the present state of industrial affairs. But this is because it does not work spiritually. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own life?" This is not a vague and fantastic ideal. It is a declaration of the principle on which human life must be based unless it is to destroy itself, for it is a principle embedded deep in the character of God. Is modern industry justified in assuming that the desire

to make money is the only sufficient motive to industrial efficiency? (When I say to make money, I do not mean to earn a livelihood. That is quite a different matter, and is the obviously legitimate ambition of every self-respecting man. Proper remuneration for services rendered is a basic axiom of all social life.) I can imagine a business man in the middle of the nineteenth century saying "Yes" without the smallest hesitation, and the whole circumstances of the moment would back him up. In view of the modern situation the answer is still given, but not with such confidence. Events are undermining the assumption. Those who believe it often speak as though it was a principle eternally embedded in human life and indisputable. None the less, it was not always so. It was not so in Greece or Rome when they were greatest, or in the Middle Ages. It is one of the assumptions of the last 150 years, and there is nothing sacrosanct about it. Men always tend to maintain that any alteration of the existing order to which they are accustomed would spell ruin. It was confidently maintained in economic circles, and, indeed, in religious circles, at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the abolition of slavery was quite inconsistent with industrial efficiency. There are men in the West Riding who, when the last Education Bill was introduced, maintained that their business could not be properly carried on without the little boys, the half-timers, whose attention was alternately claimed by the school and the mill. It will not do any longer for church-people to evade the duty of thought and action merely by throwing about vague phrases in regard to "unrest" or "extremists" or "Socialism." We must remember that those who say the Creed are committed to certain principles of life; that if great reaches of human activity defy these principles it is our business to say so, and in all reasonable ways work for their alteration and improvement.

It is not merely a case of this class against that class. The leaders of the industrial world are not so bigoted in the matter as they are sometimes supposed to be. There is enough goodwill in those who work the present order—both masters and men—to go a long way towards producing a better one, and nothing will help so much in the process as the candid criticism and the abounding hopefulness which should come from those who profess the principles of Jesus Christ. Can we produce a system of industry in which the service of the community shall be the first consideration, and the proper remuneration of all who take part in it the second? I believe that it is possible; that a man should be able to devote his life to the business of supplying the community with some of the necessaries of life—say, as a manufacturer or

a merchant—with as little greed of gain in his mind as if he were going into one of the Services, and with as true an interest in his work and as great a readiness to put his best into it as if he were becoming a member of one of the great professions. It is true that for the rank and file in the great industries, as, indeed, in the Services, a great deal of their work must be such as cannot in itself interest or inspire. But I submit that the man who should hew coal or shunt railway trucks or work in a factory as a properly paid and essential servant of the community would be working on a higher level of motive, and therefore will do better work, than the man who works as little as he can for the most he can get, simply because he feels, rightly or wrongly, that the ultimate end of his labour is the private gain of his employer or of the company which owns the business.

The whole so-called labour agitation has directed itself during a period of half a century and more to this reorientation of industry from private enterprise to community service. How it can ultimately be effected is a matter for experts to decide. Our concern with the whole question is that, of the two great motives of private gain and public service, the one produces pride of wealth and the other pride of work. We all know, of course, and warmly recognise the fact, that numbers of Christian men are engaged in private enterprise, who, by their sense of justice, their kindness, their generosity, contrive to emancipate themselves from many of the evils which are inherent in the system itself. But it cannot be said that the system encourages a Christian outlook, and if that be so, it is the duty of Christian men to work for its improvement. I do not advance this as a personal opinion, but as the considered opinion of the whole of the responsible leaders of the Anglican communion as expressed in the resolutions passed at Lambeth last August. I will quote two of them, which are deserving of the most serious attention of church-people at this time:

"An outstanding and pressing duty of the Church is to convince its members of the necessity of nothing less than a fundamental change in the spirit and working of our economic life. This change can only be effected by accepting as the basis of industrial relations the principle of co-operation in service for the common good in place of unrestricted competition for private or sectional advantage. All Christian people ought to take an active part in bringing about this change, by which alone we can hope to remove class dissensions and resolve industrial discords.

"In obedience to Christ's teaching as to covetousness and self-seeking, the conference calls upon all members of His Church to be foremost both by prsonal example and sacrifice in maintaining the superiority of the claims of human life to those of property. To this end it would emphasise the duty which is laid upon all Christians of setting human values above dividends and profits in their conduct of business, of avoiding extrava-

gance and waste, and of upholding a high standard of honour and thoroughness in work. In a word, they must set an example in subordinating the claim for rights to the call of duty."[1]

These resolutions are serious indeed. Either they are mere platitudes or they mean that the Church's responsibility is grave. What can she say or do?

She stands for the fact, in the first place, that human nature is too great to face its corporate activities on some self-centred motive. The men who uphold the selfish motive can only do so by belittling human nature. 'Human nature being what it is,' they say, inferring that the only real incentive which tells is hope of gain. The war has proved in practice how untrue that is. But the believer in the Incarnation knows it already. In the second place, the Church must realise and teach that industrial systems, like other human activities, are not outside the interests of Christ. To acknowledge His sovereignty is to acknowledge it in every department. Any industrial system, to those who believe in the Divine possibilities of man, is not an end in itself, but an expression of that community life in which we realise our membership one of another, and thereby prepare ourselves for that supreme community life of the new human race to which we have been called. Men can only be saved as social beings. Hence the following of Christ does not mean an abstract allegiance out of touch with the trivial round and the common task. It means following Him in social relationships, never resting until our community activities, whether international or industrial, can be squared with His purpose and worked on His principles. This is no Utopian dream; it is simply the practical course to which the increasing unrest is driving us more definitely every day.

This involves the responsibility of personal example. To act upon the second of these resolutions to which I have just referred has a very acute bearing on what may be called the business life of church-people in their thousands, whether they be partners or workers in industry or receivers of dividends. They have to ask themselves whether it is moral or immoral to receive dividends from the toil of their fellow-men without any enquiry into the circumstances in which they work and live. They have to see to it that, whatever the economic system may be, the sacredness of contracts is observed, that pledges are kept, and, not least, that work for which renumeration is received is done honestly and thoroughly.

I ask, in conclusion, what is the prospect? There seem to be, in the main, two alternatives. One is that of violent revolution,

[1] Lambeth Conference Report, p. 46.

which obviously would destroy more than it could ever construct, and which, we trust, the common sense of our people, unless provoked beyond endurance, would never permit. The other is the growth of a strong public opinion based on Christian sanctions, by which such readjustments are effected, drastic though they may have to be, as will enshrine in the economic system of the future those Christian principles which, as I have pointed out, are at present in large measure neglected. It is certain, indeed, that so delicate an operation on the body economic can never be performed by violence, but only by the enlightened goodwill, exercised, it may be, over a period of many years, of all who are involved in the industrial life of the nation. But the true success of the process, both as to its spread and as to its attainment of the object of establishing industrial peace, will be precisely proportionate to the capacity of Christian men to see the vision, to lead the way, to combine adventure with caution, and to subordinate all to what they believe to be the will of God. How far the Church can think this out and is prepared to do her part is a question to which only the story of the twentieth century can give the answer.

* * * * *

I have tried in the preceding pages to look at some of the tasks with which the Church is confronted in the light of that supreme task which is the very reason for its existence—namely, to be an interpreter of God. This, and nothing less than this, is the Church's final and fundamental policy. For the God she interprets is the God who, in Christ's own picture, will seek a lost world or a lost soul "until He find it," a God whose immeasurable love cannot and will not be conquered. This Divine and aggressive compassion must be interpreted by the Church in an ever-extending enterprise to capture the nations for the Kingdom of God, and to win men everywhere to its allegiance. The need for this policy is just as peremptory if you look at it from the point of view of the world. For all the problems to which I have alluded are at bottom the human problem, the problem of remaking men. It is only as men are re-created that the world will be re-created. The world's unrest can only be cured by men who have found their rest in God. This means quite practically a new abandonment of sacrifice in the Church's mission to the world, and for us a fresh campaign of evangelisation in the towns and villages of Britain.

Conversion is an old-fashioned word, but it alone adequately expresses at once the condition of progress for society and its members, and also the effect which the impact of the Church

ought to produce. In the pursuit of this policy, and this alone, we shall discover the bond of union between our various schools of thought, a bond which tends to be hidden the moment that secondary matters are allowed to monopolise the Church's attention. By this endeavour, and by this alone, the Church will win its soul, for, compelled to own the "impossibility" of such an enterprise, it will be thrown back on the eternal and illimitable resources of God.

We are, in fact, being forced back to the position, which has sometimes been obscured in the midst of "modern thought," that if there is to be any "salvaging of civilisation," it will only be achieved by those who have rediscovered God in Christ, who are thinking out, and are prepared to live out, what that implies. The interpretation of God is no mere matter of words. It is a way of life, the symptoms of which have been far from obvious in the Church—at least, in recent times. Men and women have quietly and respectfully received the tradition—the faith once delivered—without realising either its amazing content or its revolutionary power. In like manner, doctrine and dogma have been tacitly rejected from many a mental cargo mainly because their inclusion, to judge by numbers of church-goers, changes no behaviour and alters no lives. But there are signs of better things. There is an unrest in the Church as well as outside it. The cry for reality is daily becoming more insistent. Men, churchmen, are craving to know God. For it is increasingly borne in upon us that only "the people that know their God" can do the "exploits" which just now are calling to be done, and that no greater honour can come to a man or a Church than to be of that "glorious company" who in every age and at every crisis have been interpreters of God.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY NEW YORK

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BILLING AND SONS, LIMITED,
GUILDFORD AND ESHER

250.3 S
W 863
Woods, F.T.

250,3S
W863

S0-BSG-137